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GREEK IDEALS

"L'homme est né si médiocre qu'il n'est bon que quand il rêve." —RENAN.

GREEK IDEALS

A STUDY OF SOCIAL LIFE

BY
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PREFACE

THIS book contains no reference which will be new to scholars and no subversively new conclusions drawn from the old evidence. It is an attempt at nothing more than an analysis of some of the ideals which are usually called Greek. And, as will be easily seen, Greek in this sense means Athenian. A short explanation then is needed, both of what is here meant by an ideal and of the limitations here imposed on the word Greek. The life of every people, in so far as it is not simply formed by circumstances, is governed by their ideals. An ideal is less violent and less unconsidered than a desire or an expectation, and thus it may have less place than passion in moving men to action. But the action to which it moves is progressive, whereas the violence of passion or the inconsiderateness of expectation, may destroy almost as often as it urges men forward.[1] An ideal is an emotionally coloured conception of a state of things which would be better than the present. It is, in a sense, intellectual because it is due to a perception of present evils and future possibilities; but it is not a complete programme for action, for a man influenced by an ideal may often stumble over obstacles to its realisation because he has not any definite method

[1] Thucydides III. 45. "Hope and passion are everywhere, hope leading, passion following, hope devising, desire making us believe good fortune inexhaustible. They work much evil, and though invisible overcome dangers actually seen."

of attaining what he desires. On the other hand, an ideal must be emotionally appreciated. It is not the kind of reality which can be understood by mere calculation or intellectual analysis. It moves because it is desired.[1] But although ideals of every kind originate in the clear thought or deep emotion of individuals, they are powerful only when many are moved by them. The common experience seems in them to produce a common vision.

The ideals of which we speak here are predominantly moral—in the widest sense of that too narrow word. We should, perhaps, apologise for saying little of the position of Art in Greek life: but in the first place our subject must be limited and, secondly, it is most untrue to the Greek spirit to be rhetorical about Art. The Art of the Greeks coloured all their moral ideals; and yet it was part of their moral ideal not to talk about Art but to produce it. Even of their literature and their philosophy we shall speak only in so far as these provide evidence of moral ideals which are typically Greek.

And now with regard to the word Greek: we shall refer chiefly to Athens in the fifth century; not only because the evidence for that is most complete, but also because what is most typical of the race or culture is to be found there and then. For by typical we do not mean what was most common, but (*a*) what was most characteristic and (*b*) what was intended half-consciously by many who could not have defined their ideal. In discussing the ideal the real Athenians must be taken as a starting-point. But we shall suppose in what follows that the everyday life of Athens is known, at least, in its chief features. It was like ours in some ways;

[1] Aristotle, Met. 1072*b*. 3. Of the activity of the first cause.

but in more important ways very unlike. We shall have to suppose the existence of many different social worlds even in the Athens of the fifth century. There was the Athens of the country-folk, to whom the city was a market or a place of meeting at festivals; the Athens of the traders and merchants, whose point of view is derived from the continual coming and going of the Peiraeus: the Athens of the wealthy few, at whose banquets anybody and everybody might be present: the Athens of industry, whose labour was directed by "captains of industry" and dependent upon an always increasing slave-caste: the Athens of the poorer craftsman, who looked with anger at the increase of large businesses: the Athens of free women, who, in theory "enclosed," yet contrived to enjoy wine and good fellowship: the Athens of boys in the gymnasia and girls in the precincts of temples: the Athens of the amateur politician, the public speaker, the military imperialist and the for-God's-sake-leave-me-in-peace good citizen: the Athens of poor jurymen, trying cases with no knowledge of law; and of sycophants, earning an income by patriotic denunciations. All these are implied in the conceptions of life and character which we call Greek. It must not be imagined, however, that the Athens of which we shall speak was in any sense isolated. We distinguish its culture from that of other cities, but it was much more a meeting-place of different peoples and standards of life than any other city of that time.

Again it will be seen that Greek social life, especially on its religious side, is treated in this book as being much more like mediæval life than like either the life of savages or the life of modern men.

And, finally, the versatility of the Greeks is more emphasised than any single idea such as " harmony " or " beauty," to express the Greek ideal. But in all their ideals what is most prominent appears to be sociability.

The argument of the book may be summarised thus: (*a*) The Greeks desired chiefly a life in society and a character completely social. And society was conceived primarily as a religious union, which was organised in its festivals so as to keep touch with the dead, to relieve the tedium of the living and to free the individual from fear. (*b*) In so far as society was organised politically, Greek social life shows a desire for flexibility in law and free local development, with the beginnings of individual freedom. (*c*) Later developments of the ideals of Greece show themselves in literature. Homer and Hesiod had set certain standards for character. The admiration for bodily beauty appears in Pindar, as it does also in the vase paintings. And the dramatists indicate the Greek admiration for intelligence, clear speech and a life of public activities. (*d*) A contrast, however, appeared between those who admired the older fashions and those who looked forward. The " old School " stood for what was traditional; and, on the other side, the clearest sighted and most humane of all was Socrates. He was the most splendid achievement of Athens, although her severest critic. (*e*) In dependence upon popular tradition and current discussions, the philosophers made Greek ideals more consistent and more exalted. Plato is the most striking moral enthusiast whose works have come down to us. He undervalues the individuality of the average man indeed, but he exalts the finest elements of emotional

and intellectual life. He expresses the desire for a perfect society, in which every man capable of a high development shall have an opportunity of doing what he is best fitted to do. (*f*) In the decline of Greek thought some traditional ideas appeared more clearly than heretofore, as, for example, the naturalness of the good life and the dignity of the common man.

In a field so large, even though severely limited, it is almost impossible to satisfy either the requirements of scholars or the expectations of the ordinary reader. Indulgence must, therefore, be asked for the many omissions and exaggerations which will appear. That they are not greater is due to the most valuable criticisms and suggestions of my friend, Mr. G. P. Moriarty; and I have also to thank Miss Melian Stawell for some important corrections.

C. DELISLE BURNS.

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CONTENTS

		PAGE
I.	ATHENIAN RELIGION . . .	1
II.	THE ANTHESTERIA . . .	12
III	THE PANATHENAIA . . .	20
IV.	THE DIONYSIA	35
V.	THE ELEUSINIA	46
VI.	POLITICS	64
VII.	THE EPIC TRADITION . . .	87
VIII.	THE FIFTH CENTURY . . .	102
IX.	THE OLD SCHOOL	117
X.	SOCRATES	143
XI.	THE PHILOSOPHERS . . .	170
XII.	PLATO ON RIGHT ACTION . .	177
XIII.	PLATO ON THE IDEAL MAN . .	189
XIV.	PLATO ON EDUCATION . . .	204
XV.	PLATO ON THE IDEAL SOCIETY .	214
XVI.	ARISTOTLE'S IDEALS . . .	237
XVII.	THE AFTERGLOW	260

GREEK IDEALS

CHAPTER I

ATHENIAN RELIGION

THE history of a people may be interpreted by reference to the kind of life which they held most desirable and the kind of character they most admired. The Greeks, and especially the Athenians, made themselves what they were by their ideals, and they have left us nothing more valuable than those ideals. These are our subject. We may begin with the statement that the life desired by the Athenian was one thoroughly social, and the character most admired was that of the man who was completely social. Lack of companionship they dreaded most, and they suspected most the man who needed no companions. On the other hand the individual had a larger place in the imagination of the Athenians than in that of any contemporary group of men. The supremacy of the social elements in life is not by any means so characteristic as the presence and power of individuality, if we compare Athens not with modern cities but with Thebes or Sparta or contemporary Egypt and the East. Individuality was valued, and the life in society was judged best in which the individual could have free play.

But what we must first explain should be considered to be rather an emotional attitude than a conscious theory or even a consistent moral practice. The attitude is one which gives great place to what we have called the social elements in life and yet allows to each individual, at least of a fairly large group if not of a whole society, a certain share in spontaneous activity. And if we are to find a Greek word for society, in this sense, it is *polis*. The life of the *polis* is the ideal life: the character admired is that of the *polites*.

So much is easily said. But the interpretation of the attitude depends upon the value we give to the word *polis*. Our first task then must be to give some sort of concrete meaning to the term, or to explain what was meant to the Athenian mind by the life of the *polis*; and this not by archæological detail as to what happened in Athens but by interpretation of the feeling for society and the individual as reflected in custom and language. We must discover what the Greek felt to be best in the life of the *polis*; and for this reason we must begin with contrasts. What must obviously be ruled out is what we now call politics. First, there is no distinction to the Athenian mind between the institutions for law and government and those for the worship of the gods or for public entertainment. Secondly, in his actions the average Athenian would not easily have distinguished what we call the sacred and the secular. The justification of these statements will be attempted later. For the present we simply deny the possibility of discussing the life of the social man as though he were primarily what we call a citizen. Our word is too narrow and colourless. The leading characteristics of the social

life of Athens were rather what we may call religious; for it was concerned chiefly with the relations of the group to certain non-human or super-human realities within or behind the world of sense. This is the original influence which forms the Athenian ideals of life and character, and in this religious sphere the highest embodiment of social life was always found. The *polis* of fact was in the main a religious union, and the ideal *polis* was also in the main religious. It had elements which were strictly, in our sense, political; but these were less fundamental and, in the social ideal, rather means than ends. Of these we shall speak later.

The Athenians prided themselves on giving much time to the service of the gods.[1] But the service of the gods was an enjoyment for themselves. Pericles is made by Thucydides to say, "We Athenians have rest from labour in the service of the gods by contests and sacrifices:"[2] and Plato, reflecting on the character of Athens, says, "The gods pitying the toils which our race is born to undergo have appointed festivals in which men alternate rest with labour; and have given them the Muses and Apollo, leader of the Muses, and Dionysus, as partners in their revels, that they might improve what education they have at the festivals of the gods and by their aid."[3] At a much later date both Pausanias and Plutarch agree that the prominence of religion gave Athens its peculiar character. But the chief feature of this religion was its social character. It

[1] Πολ. Αθ. III. 8. Twice as many festivals in Athens as elsewhere. *cf.* Lycurgus adv. Leocrat. 149. "You differ most from other men in piety towards the gods, reverence for your ancestors and devotion to your country." There were seventy festival days in the Athenian year.

[2] Thucydides II. 38. [3] Laws, 653. Jowett's trans.

was not dogmatic: and no creed was preached or even clearly held. For religion meant action of a certain kind, including the lowest form of magic and the highest symbolism. The most important point, however, for us now is that it was the unifying bond of all members of the *polis*. This was so in every Greek city, but more consciously so in Athens.

In order to emphasise the importance of this conception of society for the appreciation of moral ideals, it may be necessary to point out (1) that one institution included traditionally all the social interests of men, and that (2) in Greece generally but in Athens especially religion never implied ecclesiasticism.

The first point is simply a re-statement of the fundamental fact that the *polis* was not what we call a state: the word meant society in general, organised indeed but organised rather religiously than, in our sense of the word, politically. The political history of Athens is no doubt important in the understanding of the Athenian ideal; but the deeper feeling, even in comparatively late times, was always excited by such *religious* events as the mutilation of the Hermæ. And, as we shall see, the grievance against Socrates was not political, and yet it was not theological: it was of a kind which can only be appreciated if the *polis* is regarded as an institution with a spirit and a form unlike any of our present institutions, but having very close likeness to a democratic church. It included also the functions of the modern state in law and administration; but of that strictly political element we shall speak separately, and even of that we may say that the political is saturated with religious feeling.

The connection between the different aspects of

society may be seen in the passage of Demosthenes' speech against Midias where he summarises his grievance. The complaint is of assault while Demosthenes was preparing the exhibition of a chorus for the Dionysia. "In none of this have I alone been wronged: but by the offences touching the chorus of my tribe, a tenth part of you has been wronged as well as I; by his outrages to my person and by his machinations against me the laws are wronged to which every one of you is indebted for security; and by all these things the god, whose choirmaster I was, is wronged and the essence of holiness whatever it be, the venerable and the divine."[1] Or again, in what we should call more obviously secular cases, Pericles and Protagoras spent a day discussing whether the javelin which accidentally had killed a certain man bore the guilt of murder;[2] and Antiphon urges that the presence of a murderer pollutes the air, bringing plagues and ill fortune, while his punishment "brings purity back to Athens."[3] Thus it is quite impossible to separate religious feeling from any part of the life of the *polis*.

Secondly, it is fundamental that the religious activity of the Athenians was shared by all. There was no segregated caste of priests and, although certain families had special religious functions, the most characteristic feature of Athenian festivals was that every member of the society had some function to perform. As the clergy do not exist in Greek religion neither do the congregation, if we

[1] Dem. *c.* Mid. (tr. Kennedy, p. 108). The last phrase is interesting. The Greek conception of the divine was always so flexible as to be easily referred to a quite impersonal "essence of things."

[2] Plutarch, Pericles, 36. [3] Tetral, I.A., par. 10.

understand that word as indicating the passive laity.[1] All Athenians act in the Anthesteria, Panathenaia and the rest. All Athenians administer what we should call their sacraments. This has a double importance for the understanding of Athenian ideals. It is seen in religious ceremony that Athens is democratic more fundamentally than in the merely political sense. For all Greek cities had " popular " religion ; but in Athens more than in any other the popular processions reached magnificence. And on the other hand, the individual Athenian felt himself to be " somebody," whereas the more primitive forms of group-religion swamp or obscure the feeling of individuality. Here, then, in the religion of the *polis* during its most elaborate and, as some would say, " formal " development, we find the sense of that relation of individual to society which we regard as peculiarly Greek. Society is a real whole. The Athenian sees it and feels it more even in the Panathenaic procession than in the Ecclesia. And yet individuality has scope. Every member of society has a special function to perform, and a special place which no one else could fill.

The general features of this social religion may be conveniently described under two headings, for its ceremonies are either sacramental or liturgical. It is the purpose of early ceremonies to assist at the crises of life: and these " rites de passage " are due to the feeling of special danger when man is passing through any exceptional stage in his growth. Evil

[1] Preaching was absolutely unknown. Religion was dramatic, not dogmatic. The temple had no space for a congregation. In fact the temple was in no sense a church. " Le veritable temple c'est à dire qui répond à l'Eglise moderne, c'est le *temenos*, le péribole . . . c'était le victeur, le curieux, le dévot qui entraient dans la *cella*, sous le conduite de l'exégéte."

powers are then most to be feared. Therefore special precautions are taken.[1] This is the origin of sacraments which are connected with the beginning of life (Baptism), the change from childhood to youth (Confirmation), from youth to manhood or womanhood (Marriage as sacrament, and Orders), and the final passage out of life (Extreme Unction). And as civilisation develops, what has begun as magic for avoiding danger becomes a sort of register taken by society of the appearance and growth of new members. Such crises or stages of individual life were marked in civilised Athens by ceremonies which we may call sacramental.

Of the introduction to society, the ceremony at the Apaturia is an example.[2] The first day was kept by a meeting of members of the clans at a supper given by a wealthy member. Sausages were the ideal fare.[3] On the second day sacrifice was made to Zeus of the tribe and to Athena ; and on the third day fathers entered on a register the children born that year, who were then introduced to the tribe. Objection might be made to the admission of the child, the form being to remove the sheep or goat which the father offered at the altar. Cases were judged by the tribe. Adopted children were introduced in this way,[4] and a new citizen had to go through this form of naturalisation. The sacrificial victims provided the food for the feast with which the ceremonies ended.[5] Here if anywhere

[1] The most widespread and the most striking of such rites are those connected with menstruation. *cf.* Frazer, Golden Bough ; "Balder the Beautiful," Vol. I. ch. 3.

[2] Herodotus I. 147. [3] Aristophanes, Acharn. 145.

[4] Adopted sons might be entered on the register at the Thargelia, Isaeus de App. H. 20.

[5] Isaeus de Ciron. 71. Demosthenes *c.* Eubul, 1315. *c.* Macart. 1054.

is a social sacrament, and such a sacrament gives definite colour to one's feeling for society.

There were also initiation ceremonies, by which the passing of childhood was marked. As an example we may cite the Brauronia. At Brauron, on the eastern coast of Attica, every fifth year, girls between five and ten years old used to be consecrated to Artemis. They were dressed in yellow and crept on their hands and knees like bears.[1] No Athenian maiden could be betrothed before being thus consecrated. And the life of the Athenian woman was thus saturated with religious feeling for the *polis*; as we may understand from Aristophanes' song of a girl's career :—

> "I bore at seven the mystic casket,
> Was, at ten our lady's miller,
> Then the yellow Brauron bear:
> Next (a maiden tall and stately
> With a string of figs to wear)
> Bore in pomp the holy basket.
> Well may such a gracious city all my filial
> duty claim."[2]

Again, every boy on reaching manhood as an Ephebos, took an oath at the temple of Aglauros[3] to defend the country, to obey the laws and to respect the institutions of the *polis*. His birth and parentage had first been examined and, his name having been put down in the register of citizens, he was then presented with a shield and lance. This is sacramental; and one would think very differently

[1] Pausanias I. 23, 33. Euripides, Iph. Tauris, 1449.
[2] Aristophanes, Lysistrata, 641. (Rogers' trans.)
[3] Legend said that Aglauros, daughter of Cecrops, had thrown herself from the Acropolis to avert a war from Attica. The patron of youthful patriotism in Athens died to preserve the peace. She is the patron-saint of women. (Aristophanes, Lysistrata, 439. Thesm. 533.)

of society if one had been through such a ritual; for in all these ceremonies the society recognises the changes in the life of the individual.

By liturgical festivals or ceremonies we mean those which mark the crises or stages in the world-life or the rhythms of nature. Such crises also are dangerous; and we may speak of them under three heads. They are, first, those of the change from winter to summer or summer to winter; and since the world-life is always changing, there is a tendency to increase the number of the festivals of nature. Secondly, those crises are marked which are represented by the beginnings or ends of human labour, especially of an agricultural kind. From these come festivals of civilisation: and these also refer to the gods, since nearly all civilisation was put down to the aid of gods. Thirdly, there are festivals which mark the achievements of human history, themselves all crises, and they thus become commemorative.

Of the first kind we find an example in the Adonia. At the end of April, at about the date of our Good Friday, the women of Athens mourned for the death of Adonis. Their cries were such as were used at funerals: and the ill-omened sound is said to have been heard when the Sicilian expedition sailed from Athens.[1] After the mourning, on the second day there was rejoicing because Adonis had risen from the dead. As the name indicates, this is a foreign or "eastern" ceremony introduced into Athenian life, but not less effective on that account.

The festivals of civilisation are chiefly those greater days of the Dionysia and Eleusinia of which we shall speak in detail later. And these are closely

[1] Plutarch, Alcib., 18.

connected with such festivals as the Synoikia, which marked the political supremacy of Athens in Attica.

As festivals marking human achievement we may count saints' days. An example is the feast of Theseus. We are told that Cimon, in 476, found the body of Theseus in Scyros, a giant coffin, a spear-head and a sword. The relics were translated to Athens with great rejoicing,[1] and the temple of Theseus became an asylum for the poor and the oppressed. On his feast-day bread and soup were given to the poor.[2] Boys had a special feast-day, the Hermaia, on which there were games and amusements in the gymnasia, no adults being present.[3] Married women had theirs, the Thesmophoria.[4] And in such cases we can feel the importance of the idea of special patronage for special members of society. Thus throughout the life of the *polis* there was an elaborate religious structure which influenced very profoundly the moral ideal.

Further, apart from ceremonies, many of the chief officials of the *polis* were "religious." The Archon Eponymus concerned himself with family morals. The Archon Basileus fulfilled the priestly office for Athens as a whole and presided at the Lenaea, the Eleusinia and the Lampadephoria. General charges of impiety came under his cognisance: and his wife, the Queen, had a special importance at the Anthesteria. Add to all this the sacred character of those who provided the chorus for a public festival and of the Gymnasiarch who looked after the schools and supplied wrestlers and pyrrhic dancers. The sacred embassies of Athens sent to

[1] The finding of Saint Gervasius by St. Ambrose is a parallel; see the Roman Breviary and the Bollandists for June 19.

[2] Aristophanes, Plutus, 627. [3] Aeschines *c.* Tim., 2.

[4] *cf.* Aristophanes, Thesmophoriasousai.

Delphi, Delos or Olympia must not be forgotten nor the prominence in social life of the sacred ships. From these and many other like facts it is evident that the atmosphere in which Athenian ideals appear, perhaps even the influence that formed them, was religious. The life of the social whole was most prominently to be seen in the festivals, and the chief social activities of every Athenian were rituals.

CHAPTER II

THE ANTHESTERIA

THE traditional conception in Athens of the nature and tendencies of group life may be understood by reference to four great festivals: the Anthesteria, the Panathenaia, the Dionysia, and the Eleusinia. Our purpose here is not to give the full details of the ritual, nor to discuss the many points of historical interest which are still far from clear. We must depend chiefly upon the broad effects of the ceremonies used and endeavour to show, first, how they express what the Greek meant by society, and, secondly, how they influence the moral and intellectual standards of the ordinary Athenian and through him of the philosopher. In these two points the reference to Athenian religion is necessary for interpreting Athenian ideals. The *polis*, in all the force of its original growth, appears in the four great festivals: the conceptions of individuality, and the admiration for beauty, harmony or intelligence, arise under the influence of these periodical gatherings of all members of the community. Even the philosopher does not make his theory of individual and society, or of the ideal state and the ideal man, except by reference to the actual life of Athens in which he shared.

In the Anthesteria we have a very ancient group-ritual of the liturgical or year-crisis type. In it the

social life appears both as a good fellowship and as an uncanny touching of hands with the dead. We have our home here in the company of those who share our food; and before we living were born, our life was in those who stand about us now unseen, the dead. The festival which marks the sense of such facts and keeps alive in a more elaborate civilisation this first grasp of human community had no small influence upon the formation of Athenian ideals. The roots of society and individual life are in the past: for the greater number of the members of any society are the dead, and perhaps it is among the dead that we should find the characters most admired. Such is the general feeling that would influence every Athenian.

The Anthesteria[1] was a festival of early spring, corresponding in many ways to the Carnival on Shrove Tuesday and the beginning of Lent on Ash Wednesday; although we should find perhaps another parallel in the feast of All Saints followed, the second of November, by that of All Souls. It was one of the oldest and most sacred of all Athenian festivals. On the first day, named from the ceremony "Cups," there was an opening of the jars containing the new wine. This began the rejoicing, which was expressed first in a carnival procession to the city of those who had new wine to sell. The country folk came in carts, and the road was the scene of a contest of ribaldry which may

[1] No adequate explanation of the name exists. It was certainly in the main a festival of the dead and not of flowers (ἄνθος). *cf.* Jane Harrison, Prol., p. 32–74.

The feast is called Dionysia, sometimes (feast of) "Cups," and only in comparatively late times Anthesteria, although it had in very early times given its name to the month Anthesterion. (Ridgeway, Proceedings Camb. Phil. Soc. 1907.)

have developed into a masquerade. "At Athens," we read, "on the feast of Cups the revellers on the carts jest with and revile those who look on."[1] And after the procession the specially shaped pots for the celebration which was to follow were sold in the market with the new wine.

But the chief feature of the whole celebration was the family banquet. In this connection slaves received special presents, greater freedom was allowed to them and they were thus in fact recognised as a constituent part of the household. It was in general an occasion for giving presents, the *polis* itself sometimes distributing money to citizens. There was also a public banquet, given by the priest of Dionysus, to which the invited brought their own provisions and each a special cup of the kind from which the festival took its name. These cups were filled with wine,[2] and at a signal all present drank in silence. He who finished first was given as prize a cake and a measure of wine.[3] What was left of the wine at the banquet was offered as a libation to Dionysus; and, as at all festivals, there followed dances and songs. The banquet seems to have ended at the setting of the sun.

Then began the less secular practice in the worship, at the temple of Dionysus "in Limnae." The wife of the King-Archon entered this temple and performed a secret sacrifice to Dionysus in the name of the whole city. The marriage of the Queen with Dionysus followed. The statue of the god was carried in procession to the house of the King-Archon

[1] Suidas s.v. χόες. [2] Aristophanes, Ach. 1000, 1087.
[3] It is specially noted that this was the civilised mixture of water and wine which Dionysus himself had made, as opposed to the raw wine of barbarism. Demosthenes Mid. 53.

called the Boukolion, and was probably left there all night, during which time the consummation of the marriage was supposed to take place : and next day the statue was restored to its temple, which was then shut for another year.

Already one might begin to feel that some uncanny power was being recognised ; but a further touch to the character of the festival was added by the ceremony of Pots.[1] On the day of Pots, sacrifice was made to Hermes of the Underworld and to Dionysus ; a mixture was made and cooked of all sorts of seeds, which was enclosed in a pot and offered by each family to Dionysus and Hermes, in behalf of the dead. This part of the festival is, perhaps, the oldest ; and indeed the Anthesteria may have been a feast of All Souls before Dionysus was conceived. It preserved its ancient ceremonies of warding off ancestral ghosts long after the wine-god had established his suzerainty, and it gave a touch of uncanny grandeur to the new divinity of rejoicing.

In the festival as a whole Dionysus appeared as the patron of conviviality and family reunions. A certain feeling of a distinct character does in fact arise at such reunions: it is not by mere magic that such meetings influence those who are present, since even to-day a common dinner is the usual expression of sympathy. But if we notice the still greater effect of a banquet among those of common blood, we shall perhaps understand why the Athenians valued the Anthesteria. The Christ-

[1] χύτραι (feminine) is the name for ordinary pots, and the masculine (χύτροι) indicates " pot-holes," in the earth : another indication of the interest of the dead in this feast. *cf.* J. Harrison, Prol. p. 36.

mas dinner survives the Mass which once celebrated the birth of Christ; and we can well imagine that the philosopher who laughed Dionysus out of existence might seem to be striking at the very root of family life.

The effects produced by the new wine and the common meal and by those more intangible causes which we crudely call the "crowd-mind" or the "social soul"—these would not unreasonably be put down to the agency of one person. He is Dionysus, the source of enthusiasm and common life. It is he who establishes the basis of all such life by the sacredness of marriage. The statue of the god, that is the god himself present in the symbol, is conducted to the Boukolion to be married to the Queen, and there he stays all the night following the evening banquet. Not simply as a god of vegetation, whose marriage is a source of the new life in the spring, but as a god of civilised life, Dionysus is married according to the official forms; and therefore Aristotle speaks both of the official form and of the consummation of marriage. We have here something more than sympathetic magic.

Again, Dionysus becomes a mystery-god by his connection with the dead. The last ceremony of the Anthesteria is that of putting all sorts of edibles (πανσπερμία) in the jars, and this was done for the dead *of the family*, in honour of Dionysus and Hermes of the Underworld. The emphasis, it seems, should still be laid upon the family as the unit, although the mention of the dead naturally brings in the figure of Hermes as guide of souls. The connection of Dionysus with the dead has puzzled many scholars: but perhaps it is because he presides over a union of the family, and because

at such a time it is natural to think of those members of the family who are no longer living, that he becomes also a patron of the dead who are to share in the family banquet. Thus the Pots for the dead are placed in the care of Dionysus just as the banquet and Cups [1] for the living are his.

Dionysus enters first as a name for the influence we feel in such a festival. That the influence in social unions should be called by the name of the god of wine or of artistic enthusiasm need not surprise us. But the figure of the god is in any case not very prominent in the festival; and therefore the Anthesteria still remained in the fifth century typical of the earliest form of group-feeling.

The festival, from our present point of view, is interesting chiefly because in it we may find some of the meaning given to the life in society. It is from such experiences as in the Anthesteria that the later philosophers derive their conception of the merging of the individual in the group, and not from an abstract view of psychological fact. Athenian philosophy is the daughter of Athenian religion. In the first place the Greek feeling for good-fellowship as the basis for society is to be seen in the Anthesteria. Not "contract" nor "fear" nor even "common purpose" so much as good fellowship makes social groups. This is the Aristotelian "friendship" of which we read at the end of the *Ethics*, and its importance for us now is in the "naturalness" which it gives to the conception of social life. The philosophical significance will be discussed later: here it is only necessary to say that no Athenian, with the experience of the yearly

[1] It may be that even the "cups" (χόες) were originally libations (χοαί) for the dead.

Anthesteria, could possibly have believed that social life was a mere convention. He could not have imagined an individual completely isolated from the past, as felt in the influence of the dead,[1] or cut off from his fellows in the ordinary needs of life. In this oldest and simplest embodiment, then, we find one of the meanings given to "society" by the Athenian mind. The devout or patriotic Athenian would have no theory to explain his feeling; but the life he most desired would most certainly be indicated for him in the ritual of the dead and the family banquet.

Secondly, it is to be noticed that even Plato, the ascetic, in his ideal state allows for drunkenness, not as a practice [2] but on the festivals of the god who gave us wine.[3] For wine, he says, may be at banquets the test of a man's character; and it was given to man "as a balm in order to implant modesty in the soul and health and strength in the body."[4] He further appoints "the chorus of Dionysus, old men softened by wine"[5] to be a committee for judging the dances of the *polis* at festivals.[6]

Without the influence of Athenian tradition such sentences of a philosopher would mean either too much or too little to us nowadays, according as we understood by good-fellowship only boon-companionship or feared the least approach to festivity. But in the Anthesteria we see the influence at work which made the Greeks eager for society, and rendered

[1] This is regarded as characteristic of Athens: *cf.* Demosthenes c. Sept. "You are the only people who have state funerals for the dead and funeral orations in which you glorify the actions of brave men." The great funeral orations are as it were the results in conscious life of the dumb feeling of the Anthesteria.

[2] Laws, 637—and of course certain occupations preclude any drunkenness. Pilots must not drink.

[3] Laws, 775. [4] Laws, 672. [5] Laws, 671. [6] Laws, 819.

unnecessary the modern tendency to regard social bonds as an obligation and not as a pleasure. In this oldest festival the individual hardly appears; he is, as it were, absorbed in the life of society through its many generations. But even here every Athenian is active in his own sphere. The ritual bond, so to speak, is not put on to the Athenians by any external and priestly authority. Every man is his own priest: and every man who has any part at all in society has his place in the festival.

CHAPTER III

THE PANATHENAIA

THE life of the city in its highest form was expressed by the Athenians in the Panathenaia. And that festival again reacted to modify or develop their conception of social life ; so that the Athenian ideal may be found both expressed in and modified by the same ceremonies. The point of importance for us here is that the Panathenaia was the expression of Athens, and in it only Athenians had a place.

The feast was viewed traditionally as a commemoration of the victory of Athena over the giants. But probably the procession and sacred dance existed long before there was any conception of Athena. It was a summer festival, at the end of July, at the beginning of the Athenian year. It may have been a harvest thanksgiving, and the olive branches carried in procession may have been signs of gratitude. The vase of oil offered as a prize indicates the store of good so far acquired. But it may have been also, as so many processions have been, a magic ritual for bringing the rain, which is needed in Attica in July. The same idea lies behind the procession on the Rogation Days according to the present Roman ritual.[1]

[1] Duchesne, Christian Worship (English trans., p. 287). "The people march in procession to the cultivated lands." The procession in Christian Rome took the same route as that followed on the old festival of the Robigalia on the same date.

The Panathenaia occurred every year, and with special magnificence every fourth year (Great Panathenaia). It lasted for four days. The chief element in the festival was the procession, our most effective record of which is the frieze of the Parthenon. The evening before there was a torch-race and much feasting. In the morning at sunrise the whole people was marshalled by officers, the men being in white.[1] The procession went from the Ceramicus to Eleusis and back to the temple of Athena Polias on the Acropolis. On the Parthenon frieze we see the order of the procession and its culminating point. Beginning from the western door of the temple the frieze covered the walls of the *cella* to the eastern end, and thus recorded in stone the ritual in which every Athenian had his place. First, at the far end of the procession are the cavalry of Athens. Some are mounting their steeds, others, already mounted, are riding in massed order.[2] Then come the musicians, and maidens bearing utensils for the sacrifice, as the choir and the acolytes with thuribles would come in a mediæval procession. For if we allow for the exclusion of women from direct religious service after the introduction of Christianity, the parallel would be complete with a mediæval procession on

[1] Paus. 1, 2, 4: "At the entrance to the city we come to a building for the getting ready of the processions which are conducted at yearly and other intervals." *cf.* Lucian, Nigrinus, *c.* 14: "A citizen had been arrested for making his appearance in coloured clothes. The onlookers felt for him and took his part: and when the herald declared that he had violated the law by attending the festival in that attire, they all exclaimed with one voice that he must be pardoned for wearing those clothes as he had no others."

[2] The great impression made by this show of horsemanship may be judged from the suggestions as to cavalry evolutions on days of procession made by Xenophon in the "Hipparch."

the day of the city's patron. Finally it may be that on the Parthenon frieze the folded cloth represents the *peplos* being received. On this great robe the record of Athena's triumph was embroidered; and on it also the figures of the greatest servants of the community might be added.[1] In the procession the robe floated like a sail over a car which, when Athens was a sea-power, was shaped like a ship.

The whole ceremony culminated in the shrine of Athena Polias, where the ancient statue was to be robed in the new *peplos*. What might be seen there we learn from Pausanias. "The object which was universally deemed the holy of holies many years before the union of the townships, is an image of Athena in what is now called the Acropolis, but what was then called the city. The legend is that the image fell from heaven, but whether that was so or not I shall not inquire. Callimachus made a golden lamp for the goddess. They fill the lamp with oil, and wait till the same day next year; and the oil suffices for the lamp during all the intervening time, though it is burning day and night. The wick is made of Carpasian flax, which is the only kind of flax that does not take fire. A bronze palm-tree placed over the lamp and reaching to the roof draws off the smoke. . . . In the temple of the Polias is a wooden Hermes, said to be an offering of Cecrops, but hidden under myrtle boughs. Amongst the ancient offerings which are worthy of mention is a folding chair, made by Dædalus, and spoils taken from the Medes, including the corselet of Masistius, who commanded the cavalry at Platæa, and a sword said to be that of Mardonius. Masistius, I know, was killed by the Athenian cavalry; but as

[1] Aristophanes, Knights, 565.

Mardonius fought against the Lacedæmonians, and fell by the hand of a Spartan, the Athenians could not have got the sword originally, nor is it likely that the Lacedæmonians would have allowed them to carry it off. About the olive they have nothing to say except that it was produced by the goddess as evidence in the dispute about the country. They say, too, that the olive was burned down when the Medes fired Athens, but that after being burned down it sprouted the same day to a height of two cubits. Contiguous to the temple of Athena is a temple of Pandrosos, who alone of the sisters was blameless in regard to the trust committed to them. What surprised me very much, but is not generally known, I will describe as it takes place. Two maidens dwell not far from the temple of the Polias; the Athenians call them Arrephoroi. These are lodged for a time with the goddess; but when the festival comes round they perform the following ceremony by night. They put on their heads the things which the priestess of Athena gives them to carry, but what it is she gives is known neither to her who gives nor to them who carry. Now there is in the city an enclosure not far from the sanctuary of Aphrodite called Aphrodite in the Gardens, and there is a natural underground descent through it. Down this way the maidens go. Below they leave their burdens, and getting something else, which is wrapt up, they bring it back. These maidens are then discharged and others are brought to the Acropolis in their stead."[1] Such was the shrine and its other special ceremonies.

But to return to the Panathenaia—the central ceremony of the festival was indeed the procession;

[1] Pausanias I. 26, 6 to 27, 3. Frazer's trans.

but the whole four days, or eight at the Great Panathenaia, were typical of all that concentration of varied interests which gave the *polis* its meaning. There was the Pyrrhic dance or dance in full armour —obviously a primitive war-dance. War is one of the fundamentally unifying occasions for a group in an earlier world; and the purpose of the war-dance is magical. Men dance thus in order to be successful in war, and the spirit which comes into them is their god. Later on, the dance is supposed to be merely commemorative, and its effect is merely a preparation, not directly practical. "Our virgin lady," says Plato, "delighting in the sports of the dance, thought it not meet to dance with empty hands; she must be clothed in full armour and in this attire go through the dance. And youths and maidens should in every respect *imitate* her example, honouring the goddess, both with a view to the actual necessities of war and to the festivals."[1]

With the dance we may connect the contest of heavy-armed soldiers who leapt from chariots (Apobatai), and the athletic contests (races, etc., and also a boat-race at Piræus), the record of which is preserved for us in the prize amphoræ.[2] All this makes social life; but there was more, and that specially Greek or even Athenian. There were recitations of Homer and other literary exhibitions.[3] Herodotus is said to have read his histories at the Panathenaia, after having read them at the Olympic

[1] Laws, 796. The title of Athena is interesting: ἡ δὲ αὖ που παρ' ἡμῖν κόρη καὶ Δέσποινα.

[2] Among the vases of the British Museum may be seen some of these. They are interesting not only as pictures of the contests, but as indicating by their rigid types, especially in the figure of Athena, the weight of an old tradition.

[3] *cf.* Plato: *Ion.*

festival. And there were chorus-singing and instrumental contests, said by Plutarch to have been introduced by Pericles.[1] There can be hardly any doubt that the Panathenaia expressed to the Athenians the spirit of Athens. It was for themselves, as civilised and living embodiments of that spirit, neither a memory of the past as the Anthesteria, nor a connecting link with the wider Greek world as were the Dionysia and the Eleusinia. Here the *polis* alone was sacramentally or liturgically present. And out of the festival came the Athena of the fifth century,—the war-goddess transformed into the political strategist, the cunning of Homer's Athena transformed into intelligence and grace. This Athena was Athens.[2]

The highest development of the worship of Athena is marked by the Parthenon. When this was built some men were already doubting whether there was any such person as Athena; but we may well imagine that the vast majority in Athens did not doubt tradition. The Parthenon was definitely a monument to Imperial Athens:[3] and Athena herself is transformed from the old Promachos, champion of a fortress, or Polias, organiser of a city, into a Mistress (Despoina). "Pheidias added something to the gods," as Quintillian says; but what he added was in part at least given him to add by the new experience of his contemporaries. His image of Athena, however, was the final embodiment of

[1] Plutarch, Per. 13.

[2] This is not merely a modern metaphor. In the illustrations to Farnell's *Cults of the Greek States* may be seen a figure of Athena, as the people of Athens, giving thanks to certain citizens.

[3] It was built with money which really belonged to the supposed Allies who had then become Tributaries of Athens.

the ancient deity. "The image itself is made of ivory and gold. Its helmet is surmounted in the middle by a figure of a sphinx . . . and on either side of the helmet are griffins wrought in relief. . . . The image of Athena stands upright, clad in a garment that reaches to her feet; on her breast is the head of Medusa wrought in ivory. She holds a Victory about four cubits high, and in the other hand a spear. At her feet lies a shield, and near the shield a serpent, which may be Ericthonius."[1] So Pausanias wrote; but the image is long since gone and the temple is ruined. And yet, more permanent than the ivory and gold, the ideal which built the city, which gathered men in the Panathenaia, which also gave birth to the magnificent dream of Athena—this ideal remains still intelligible.

Athena—or shall we say Athens?—is born of the soil.[2] She arises in the dance and the procession, in the recurring ritual which makes a centre for itself by creating her.[3] But she is not the character played by a leader in ritual, as we may suppose Pan and Dionysus to have been. She is a form of the eternal Maiden, the representative and thus the cause of prosperity.

[1] Pausanias I. 24, 5. Frazer's trans.

[2] The early form of her name (Athenaia) is adjectival: but I do not see why that should imply that the name of the god comes from the name of the place. The adjective may refer to a quality. Thus the "Athenian Maid" would be the maid of a certain kind. This is in opposition to Jane Harrison, Prol. p. 301. Farnell argues that Athena gave her name to the city, and the city gave it back to her as an adjective.

[3] I do not mean the Panathenaic procession or ritual, but that which was its primitive source, and further we must allow for the cumulative effect of *all* the festivals connected with Athena. At the Plynteria a string of figs was carried, at the Oscophoria there was a race of youths bearing grapes on the spray, at the Procharisteria "the magistrates sacrificed when the ears of corn were beginning to show." (Suidas *cf.* Farnell, I., p. 291.)

Now the prosperity sought for in the service of Athena is not pastoral, but in part agricultural and in the main civic. She is that to which the first agriculturists attend, which is in Athens the olive.[1] The magic olive tree on the Acropolis which was burnt down by the Medes and sprouted up again miraculously was "the luck of Athens," and, in a vague sense, Athena herself. But in this case we seem to see the effort of the worshipper's mind to separate the external sensuous fact from the inner cause. Athena is not the olive, but that which makes the olive grow. To us, we may suppose, the olive itself is that which makes the olive grow; if, at least, we are not too idealistic in our philosophy. The force that makes the olive grow is an hypothesis to explain the distinction between what we can see or feel and "the life" or "the spirit" of the tree. This life of all olives would be Athena. And as she is that which makes the olive grow so she is that which makes the city grow. Thus she is conceived as the teacher of the industrial arts. She is the instructor in the war-dance, the protectress of the city; and as such takes a special interest in rationalising the arbitrary rigour of primitive law, as it is shown in the *Eumenides* of Aeschylus. She is also concerned with the arts of music and of poetry at her festival, although she was never considered as the source of artistic inspiration. And in all her worship she is the embodiment of Reason,—not of that dull analysis which we moderns tend to mistake for reasoning, but of that creative imagination which is the source of all real science.

The impossible derivation of "Athene" given in

[1] *cf.* Lysias: On the sacred olive. Certain trees scattered over Attica were held by the *polis*.

the *Cratylus*, is nevertheless an indication of the character of the goddess as popularly conceived. Socrates there says that the interpreters of Homer "assert that he meant by Athene 'mind' and intelligence; and indeed (Homer) calls her by a still higher title, 'divine intelligence,' as though he would say: This is she who has the mind of God."[1] And so to the thinking Athenian his chief Goddess becomes the Reasoning which built up and maintained Athens. For, since no one can reason when he likes, but the process seems to occur in us at the touch of some power not ourselves, it would be natural to conclude that this power was a person, and indeed the very person whom your forefathers worshipped blindly.

It seems hardly necessary to ask what influence the worship of Athena and the conception of the divine therein developed can have had on moral ideals. There was no special difficulty, no barbaric crudity in the worship, to be opposed, and hardly any "irreverence" in the myth. A philosopher might be tempted to say that Athena was a celestial body such as the moon,[2] and a sceptic might ridicule the splitting headache Zeus must have had before he brought forth the armed maiden.[3] But most of the great thinkers were Athenian in spirit if not in birth, and to be too particular about Athena and her worship might savour of disloyalty.[4] It is indeed difficult to imagine that even the philosophers

[1] Plato, Crat. 407.

[2] Aristotle is said to have said this. Arnobius, adv. Gentes, 3-31.

[3] Lucian, Dialogues of the Gods, viii.

[4] Euripides is not too critical of her; but he expressed some feeling against Apollo (in the Ion) and Aphrodite (in the Hippolytus). Aristophanes can laugh at Dionysus, but not at Athena.

actually doubted her existence. They would have said perhaps that what people referred to as Athena was not of such a character as the poets had imagined ; but they would hardly have said that no such being existed. However that may be, the nature of the goddess worshipped in Athens made an immense difference to the development of Athenian ideals.

The effect on thought may perhaps be called indirect, but it is omnipresent. For without the worship of Athena Athenian philosophy would never have arisen ; although perhaps it may be truer to say that the same spirit produced both. The interest in all that makes civilised city life, and the consciousness of what it was that so made it—industrial art, common discussion and rational method—this is what produced the worship of Athena, as, later on, it produced Athenian philosophy. Sophists went to other cities besides Athens ; but in none did such brilliant consequences follow. Ionia had indeed laboured at philosophy long before Athens ; but it was superseded when Athens began to think. We need not recite the well-known facts concerning the subjects of the first Greek speculation in Ionia. We may take it for granted that Greek philosophy when it came to Athens was chiefly concerned with the constitution of matter, perhaps a little with mind at large, but generally with the Universe external to man. The sophists and scientists came to Athens, and Athens transformed their attitude. She made Ethics and Politics the most pressing problems ; and it was the Athenian in Socrates who " brought philosophy down to earth." Naturally the contrast was not abrupt. The sophists of other cities had begun to discuss morality before Athens became a philosophical

centre; they may even be held to have humanised philosophy; and it is to Protagoras of Abdera that Mr. Schiller now looks as his predecessor in the reform he proposes. The sophists may have been Pragmatists or Humanists. They had certainly made the practical effect of their teaching the criterion of its value. But even if we allow that a transformation took place under the sophists since the earlier and "physical" stage of Greek thought, we must further admit another transformation when philosophy became Athenian. After Socrates' death Greek philosophy became definitely Athenian philosophy for some centuries, and during that time we may mark the effect of the worship of Athena perhaps upon the course of speculation and certainly upon the conceptions of the ideal life and the ideal character.

First, the nature of the state religion made the admission of new thought comparatively easy. The Athenians, like others after them, did not want to go too far; but although in the end they killed Socrates, we must not forget that they had allowed him many more years to annoy them than he would have been allowed in any other Greek city of that date. They did not want to reason too much; but they had no fundamental prejudice against reasoning as such, and this was due to the nature of their religion and their conception of a deity who was worthy of worship. In any case it is clear that the character of the god reflects the character of the people; and if the god's character is generally admitted, the conception reacts upon the attitude of the worshippers towards life in general. It was no small gain to the philosophers to find Athena established as worthy of worship.

If comparison is not impertinent, we may cite the contrast with Greek thought to be found in the development of the Hebrews. Their conception of deity subordinates entirely the intellectual qualities; for Jahwe, fine moralist though he may have been, never reasoned about the evidence for morality, and in his sacred books we find command and correction but never reasoning. His people are told what to do, never why they should do it. Again he has no interest in politics, regarded as the science of the adjustment of relations between man and man. Democracy could not flourish in his land, for he never was a comrade of his people: at most he communicated with the few. And so his worship constituted a prejudice against free speculation among equals. Or again, we may compare the attitude of Roman gods towards intellectual interests. They were suspicious of the advent of the first philosophers: and they saw in reasoning the subversion of order. They were the embodiment of fixity. Indeed the Roman word for man's attitude towards them, "religio," whatever its derivation, indicates the rigidity of an established ritual rather than the good-fellowship of the Athenian worship. Any such abrupt contrasts must undoubtedly be unfair to the many excellent elements in the Hebrew and the Roman religion: but even allowing for these, we may assert that only in Athenian religion could one find such openness of mind as made it possible for philosophy to flourish and develop so rapidly. The majority in Athens were not indeed any less foolish than are the majority in London. It is a question of atmosphere. Even a fool may help philosophers if he is not proud of his folly: but the intellectual pride of the wise man is as

nothing if compared with the blind complacency of the fool who will have no argument because he cannot argue correctly. In Athens every one argued —so much indeed that it became a taunt against the whole city. In Athens men wanted to know why they should do this or that: they desired reasons not commands. Thus they imagined the force which made their city to have some uncanny connection with reasoning. And this again reacted on the conception of what they held valuable and made it possible for the Athenian Socrates to value all scientific investigations so highly. For Athena's character shows a definite bias towards reasoning and intellectual discussion among equals.

Such was the atmosphere which resulted from the worship of Athena. But we may understand its value still more fully by noticing that, in the last stage of Athenian religion, Athena was undoubtedly conceived as the soul of Athens itself. We have contemporary examples of the same process of thought; for not only primitive savages make mythology, but we too are, in our self-conscious way, mythologists. The figure of Britannia on the English penny is what is called a symbol of England; but it refers to the same kind of reality as that of which the fifth century Athenian thought when he looked at an Athenian coin and saw the head of Athena. There is something, certainly, which makes all Englishmen keep together and distinguishes them from all Frenchmen. To say that this something is not a person does not imply that it is nothing at all; and in spite of the philosophical mistake which would be involved in supposing that a person called Britannia exists, we can see an advantage even for philosophy, in making "the soul

of a nation" personal. But we shall leave this general issue to a later chapter, and consider the immediate effect of such a method. Britannia, for example, is given a definite character and interest. She bears a shield, and, as a sea power, holds a trident. Her character is fixed in political cartoons and popular song. And as Athena is sometimes changed to the owl, so Britannia is transfigured into a lion.[1] The connection is probably no closer in one case than in the other; and there seems to be no reason for saying that Athena was originally an owl or that we have traces here of totemism.

Further, we should notice that Britannia symbolises not only the power of England but her aspirations and ideals. She is what England "stands for," whether that be law and order, or constitutional government, or the protection of weak nations, or any other such admirable purpose. So also Athena is a symbol of the aspirations and ideals of Athens; and there is a certain piquancy in the contrast between the intelligence and the artistic interests of Athena as compared with the more primitive concerns of Britannia. For no one ever suspected Britannia of being intellectual. Can we avoid supposing that here we have a reflection of the things which are thought valuable in the two nations? Athena is at once the soul of the actual city of Athens and a world-power called reasoning or that which makes men reason.

The same process which produces in our day the symbols of national character and national aspirations was at work in the modifying of the primitive

[1] As the comic figure we have John Bull in England and Demos in Athens. The mythology is the same in kind. Of course in modern mythology, La France, Germania, etc., are everywhere on monuments and coins.

Athena. It is unfair to say that the Olympians were unchangeable or that Athena did not develop in character since the Heroic Age which probably created her. The low cunning of Homer's Athena [1] is not to be found either in the Polias of the Acropolis or in the Lady Queen of the Parthenon. And it must not be imagined that we can put aside this process of symbolic personification as worthless because we can treat Britannia, for example, as a poetic fiction, and satisfy ourselves by remarking that a nation is not a person. It is mythology to speak of the life or the character of a nation; but it is legitimate, if we know what we are doing; and it is undoubtedly effective. So even for a modern thinker it is impossible lightly to pass over the magnificent hypothesis which is Athena. No dream so splendid which has beguiled men so long, no dream to which even the waking life of philosophy owes so much, is altogether worthless. For in the figure of Athena we have the finest embodiment of what the Athenians meant by the *polis*.

[1] *e.g.* in the trick by which she killed Hector or in her inspiration of the wily Odysseus.

CHAPTER IV

THE DIONYSIA

WHEN we turn to the Dionysia and Eleusinia, society seems to be giving a more prominent place to the individual. In the Dionysia the development took place of the great expression of individual genius—tragedy and comedy, and during the festival it was the custom that individual merit should be recognised officially by the state. In the Eleusinia the individual is initiated, and the greatest moment of the festival was an expression of an attitude towards death as a crisis which the individual must face alone. These two festivals, then, stand apart in the meaning they give to the life of the *polis*, for in them the general spirit of the group is only an opportunity for the individual to review life and death for himself. There is not, indeed, any definite line to be drawn between these and the festivals we have already discussed; for religion in the Dionysia and Eleusinia is as completely social as in the Anthesteria and the Panathenaia; but neither Dionysus nor Demeter are deities of the civic group, for their servants are those in every group who are specially inspired or initiate. A man does not in the truest sense worship them as an Athenian but as one to whom the god has come; and although here, as in more formal festivals, many would see only the outer ceremony, the few who

saw more would be able to distinguish the externalism of the Panathenaia from the "inner light" of Dionysus and Demeter, since these two come to their worshippers and live in them. This is not the mere imagination of a later age. The Athenians themselves class Dionysus and Demeter together as mystery deities; they are worshipped together at the Eleusinia; and Socrates and Plato refer to them and not to Zeus, Athena and Apollo, when they wish to explain their most intense experience.

For the worship of Dionysus there were many festivals;[1] but chiefly in Athens, if we exclude the Anthesteria, two,—the Lenaea and that called generally the Dionysia. The Lenaea, which was officially called "Dionysia," and distinguished from other feasts of Dionysus, when necessary, as "that in the Lenaion," was celebrated in the month of Gamelion, that is to say about the middle of January. It began with a procession, under the direc-

[1] As the Eleusinia is only one among many mysteries so the Dionysia is only one among many festivals of ecstasy or wild enthusiasm. With the civic festivals of the god of wine we may connect the many unofficial cults of special religious societies which gave a colour and a setting to the more stately ceremonies of the *polis*. For religion was not altogether official even in Athens. The private revivalisms are indicated in the attack by Demosthenes on Aeschines: "After you were grown up you attended your mother's initiations, reading her books and helping in all the ceremonies; at night putting the fawn-skin on the novices, swilling, purifying and scouring them with clay and bran, raising them after the lustration and bidding them say—'I have escaped evil. I have found what is better'—priding yourself that no one ever howled so lustily. . . . In the daytime you led your noble orgiasts, crowned with fennel and poplar, through the streets, squeezing the big-cheeked serpents and lifting them over your head, and shouting 'Evoe Saboe' and capering to the words 'Hues Attis, Attis Hues'—saluted by the old women as Leader, Conductor, Chestbearer, Fan-bearer and the like, getting your reward of tarts and biscuits and rolls."

tion of the King-Archon, which ended at the Lenaeon. This precinct, which gave its name to the feast, was almost certainly named from the wine-press (ληνός) a sacred model of which was probably kept in the temple. " In the contests at the Lenaea of Dionysus the torch-bearer passing on lights cries : ' Call the God ! ' And the listeners shout, ' Iacchus, son of Semele, giver of riches ! "[1] A chance gloss on Aristophanes gives us this hint of religious action, and we can feel the god arising from that prayer. Then followed dramatic performances, which were probably played not in the great theatre on the slope of the Acropolis but in the precinct called the Lenaeon, where a wooden structure served to seat the audience. This structure would naturally disappear after the building of the greater theatre of stone, the remains of which are known to every one : and in general we may reserve our consideration of drama for our discussion of the " Great Dionysia." It is to be noted, however, that at the Lenaea the audience would be exclusively Athenian, as foreigners would not be visiting Athens so early in the year as January. Hence the comedies would be more pointedly in reference to local figures and the poet could treat his hearers as members of a family.

As for the festival called by the Athenians the " Great Dionysia " or the " Dionysia in the City,"[2] the first point of importance is that it is not a festival of native origin. The cult epithet of the god in this festival is " Eleutherios," which indicates that he is a Bœotian god brought to Athens from the village of Eleutherae. It is generally supposed that the god was introduced into Athens in the sixth century,

[1] Scholiast, on Aristophanes' Frogs, 479.

[2] Διονύσια τὰ μεγάλα, ἐν ἄστει.

and from that time on he grows more and more in importance as the city rises in power and wealth, until at last an Athenian saying " Dionysus " would probably think more of the Greater Dionysia than of his ancestral " Anthesteria." This comparatively new festival gathers to itself all the enthusiasm of a city, consciously growing ; and in the end the city of Athena becomes to the world the temple of drama, that is to say, of Dionysus. In the same way the ancient festival of Maundy Thursday was gradually eclipsed during the Middle Ages by the magnificence of Corpus Christi, although both celebrated the same gift to man and the same central figure. The Easter plays of earlier times tended to be transferred to Corpus Christi and, as is well known, at York and other towns the dramatic festival of the year was " The Pageants of Corpus Christi." In the same way the Greater Dionysia absorbed the dramatic interests of the Lenaea. Secondly, the date of the Dionysia (April) made it an occasion on which many foreigners could be present in Athens. The seas were again navigable. Business or pleasure would bring to the central city of Hellas travellers from east and west ; and they would take back to their homes from Athens their enjoyment of the Dionysia. Hence the admiration for the tragedians outside Athens in the whole Greek world, and hence also the tendency of later ages to think of Athens chiefly as the source of drama.

But it is not simply as an opportunity for drama that we must consider the Greater Dionysia. What Corpus Christi was for the mediæval man could not be explained by a study of the Mystery plays, since the great procession was part of the festival : and so we must first concentrate our attention upon

the effect of the Dionysia not due to drama. That festival opened with a procession which began at sunrise, conveying the god from the temple on the slope of the Acropolis to a temple in the Academy.[1] A great concourse was marshalled by the members of the family who had this right; magistrates, soldiers, artists, and simple citizens were there, with strangers and visitors to Athens. At the temple in the Academy youths sang a hymn to Dionysus and danced; there was apparently only one such chorus and hymn. Sacrifice was then offered, combined as usual with a banquet, and the god was conducted back to the temple near the theatre. But in this return, which was called a carnival or revel (κῶμος), all restraint was given up. Those in the procession had now had their fill of wine; and they were dressed in fantastic garbs. The wildest rejoicing was now in place; for the god had come to his worshippers. Athena, Apollo and Zeus might be served with studied ceremony, but Dionysus demanded that his servants should "let themselves go." This does not, indeed, involve the later "revivalism" of Greek religion when the wilder Dionysus of the hills gave the chief elements to the character of the worship; but even as a city god, Dionysus is the god of enthusiasm, the simplest type of which is intoxication.

The character of the city god is, however, made orderly by his connection with tragedy. The contests between the tragedians are known to all.

[1] Pausanias I. 29. 2: 'Outside the city, in the town-lots and on the roads the Athenians have sanctuaries of the gods and graves of heroes and men. Close to the city is the Academy. . . . On the way to it is an enclosure sacred to Artemis. . . . There is also a temple of no great size to which they bring the image of the Eleuthenan Dionysus every year on appointed days."

It is said that Peisistratus, who had been already expelled twice, instituted the prize for tragedy (in 535 B.C.) at the Great Dionysia, at the beginning of his third reign.[1] And from about that time drama, and especially tragedy, developed rapidly. It was always essentially religious. The theatre was a sacred place enclosing the altar round which the chorus danced, and the subjects were sacred legends, not contemporary crises. The plots retained their ancient ritual form, based upon death and resurrection. But besides being religious, tragedy was also Hellenic and not local in its bearing. It was part of the religion of the *polis*, but in it the *polis* meant less a locality than a certain type of culture; for Athens set forth in her art what she opposed in her politics, the common bonds of civilised humanity.

Before the play in the fifth century there was a formal "presentation" to Athens, made in the theatre by the envoys of allied cities. It was partly an expression of Athenian imperialism and partly a sign of the bonds between Athens and the rest of the Greek world. Then also public proclamations might be made; and the priest of Dionysus, who presided over the play, would make his prayer. The tragedy would then begin; and between its different parts the audience would have time for the refreshments of the day. The mingling of what we should call sacred and secular was complete.

This is not the place to review the play itself. A tragedy must be seen in surroundings other than a modern theatre in order to be felt as the Greeks felt it. For it was altogether and, to our minds, rigidly formal or ritualistic, and yet closer to the simple

[1] Plutarch, Solon 29.

and essential forces of nature than we can well imagine it. Modern barbarism and formlessness is really more conventional than the masks and the buskins under an Athenian sky. There one might see Agamemnon, Clytemnestra, and Orestes torn by the great evil of blood for blood, and the gradual emergence of that alternative which was Athens. One might pity the blind Oedipus and fear the overmastering past from which no good man is safe. One might discover with surprise the heights and depths in a Phaedra or a Medea; and hear one's dreadful doubt cried to the sky in the accusation of the gods themselves. And indeed we cannot tell how much more the Greeks had, for only the barest fragments are left of that magnificent tragedy which was perhaps the highest achievement in their pursuit of the ideal. Aristotle, in this as in his *Ethics* expressing the common judgment, tells us that by tragedy men are purified from all those "humours" which rise within the soul of man, and confuse and destroy or degrade those who cannot find an outlet for them. Such outlets for emotion have been provided by every form of religion, in hymn-singing, in the ceremony of the Mass, as well as in the furious self-mutilation of primitive cults. And it is as a religious method that Aristotle discusses tragedy, not simply as an artistic effort at producing enjoyment. In this we see the high achievement of the Greeks and the nature of the ideal which guided them. For the effect of tragedy, upon those who are developed enough to understand it, compares favourably with the effect of religious self-mutilation or the screams and noises with which other religions have sought purification of spirit. And perhaps it is not simply a prejudice which sees in

pity and fear, excited by tragedy according to the Greeks, the true purification of which all others are childish or primitive forecasts. Athens discovered something permanently human in her development of tragedy. And thus while the temple of every other Athenian deity is deserted or ruined, Dionysus alone, although unacknowledged, reigns in all the theatres of the civilised world. The actor, whether of comedy or tragedy, is still inspired by the god; and whenever an audience at the most modern of plays laughs or shudders, without knowing it they feel the presence of the god.

The emergence of tragedy was a sign of the Athenian ideal, and it reacted upon the current conceptions of life. First, as a sign, tragedy was in existence before Athens was great and perhaps even before Dionysus was connected with it. But the Athenians gave to the primitive magic-dance and song its elevation and its power. That alone shows the spirit of the people. What can they have thought most admirable if they assisted at such a new revelation? It is difficult for us now to imagine what the world would be without the stage, and even those who least understand drama owe a debt to tragedians of whom, perhaps, they have never heard.

The Athenians, and not only the tragedians, felt that the life most worth living was one of deep and even destroying emotion. Their religion had a place for such feeling as well as for staid and normal behaviour; and social life to them meant a sharing in all that drama could do as well as a common delight in the orderliness and good-fellowship which is the basis of the *polis*. When, therefore, we consider why the Athenian valued the *polis* and what they meant by it, we must remember the Dionysia

as well as the meetings in the streets or the solemn procession of the Panathenaia. For this makes the *polis* very much more than what we call a state ; and it prevents us from supposing that Athenians were conceited and self-conscious villagers. Tragedy introduces us to the company of those who have lived or died greatly. It cannot fail to affect those who are habitually watching it, not simply as an entertainment but as a religious exercise and yet critically. For at this point, before we consider the influence of literature, we may speak of the Greek conception of the function of the poet in society. The Dionysia gave the poets their opportunity, and in that festival appears most clearly the tradition which made their work possible.

The poets are expected to be teachers. The old school and the new, Aristophanes and Plato, agree upon that ; although they probably put different meanings upon the same words. The Greeks, therefore, cannot conceive the poetic art without reference to a criterion which is, in the strictest sense of the word, moral. At the Dionysia tragedy was expected to raise the thought and illumine the life of Athens ; and there can hardly be any doubt that such was its effect. The only correction that we should have to make if any one said that tragedy must be didactic is due to our modern confusion between teaching and preaching. Preaching was, happily, unknown in Athens. When Greeks spoke of teaching they generally meant an incitement to creative and spontaneous thought, not an inculcation of precepts or a repeating of information ; but preaching as distinct from teaching is generally a rhetorical obfuscation of already obsolete issues by a person secure from immediate criticism or ques-

tioning. So great is the confusion of modern terms that those who desire a serious drama seem to imagine that the stage should be used as a pulpit. It may be so; although it seems unfair that those who have escaped from being preached to death by a mad curate should find themselves in a theatre the victims of a tub-thumper. In any case there is nothing Greek about that kind of didactic drama. The whole festival of Dionysus is a repudiation of such dry-as-dust moralising. For when the Greeks looked to the poets for teaching, they expected to be roused to thought and induced to criticise not only their teachers but the gods themselves.

As to the effect of tragedy upon the Greek ideals of life and character, we must notice first its humanising effect. In drama the artist is less than in any other art aloof from society. A painter deals with things not human, and he cares little for the looker-on. Even a musician does not play upon a human instrument. But the dramatist's material is human character, and his method makes him depend both upon actors and upon audiences. Again, society no longer remains merely a company of neighbours when drama affects it; for then we see human life as something not local or ephemeral but universal in its sufferings and its triumphs.

In the Dionysia the Athenian expressed his admiration for the heights and depths of human life. The life worth living was not only the careful and orderly fellowship of Anthesteria or Panathenaia—it is spoken with no depreciation of those festivals; for in the Dionysia we discover the greater life of the emotions. Thus Nietzsche makes the Dionysiac element in Greek religion the repudiation of the Apolline, as the impulse to spontaneous

change and individual enthusiasm is the repudiation of a staid sobriety. And finally, the Dionysia affected Athenian ideals so much that in later years, when her political power had passed, the city of Pallas Athena became, for all practical purposes, the city of Dionysus. Athenians were known as countrymen of Aeschylus, Sophocles or Euripides; and to this day we live in the finest Athens rather by the appreciation of tragedy than by fingering the dead record of futile warfare and political jealousies, which is usually called Greek history.

CHAPTER V

THE ELEUSINIA

In all Athenian religion there is nothing that we should more easily recognise as religious than the Mysteries. That is so, no doubt, because of the great effect the Mysteries have had on our own religious tradition; for not even Protestantism, with all its fear of ritual, has been able to escape the ideas and the emotions which were developed at Eleusis, since the literature of Christianity, especially in its early documents, is filled with the language and conceptions of Mysteries. The development of which all such Mysteries were proved capable is one of the reasons for their immense effect on the progress of thought. The first Athenian philosophers owed not only some of their terms, but even some of the experience on which they relied, to Mysteries; and the whole of Athenian life was coloured by the meaning given to it at the Eleusinia. Hence in the study of ideals it is necessary to allow for this influence; and if possible to explain the moral standard which initiation established at first in Athens and then in the whole Greek world.

It is well known that the Eleusinian Mysteries were only the most striking of many secret rites; and, therefore, although the cult of Demeter and Persephone is chiefly in question here, we may

suppose that the same sort of effect was found to come from the other types of Mystery. Orphism especially may be regarded as having given something of importance to the life of Greece; and, doubtless, if we knew more of the many private religious societies in Athens, we should be able to trace more of the language of Plato and Aristotle to a source in secret rites.

First, then, the Mysteries of Eleusis must be described in their effects as a religious experience; and for this purpose the ritual and belief must be considered as one whole, since it was as the expression of one complete view of life that they had most effect on the moral atmosphere and on the religions which were to succeed them.

Even apart from the direct effect of the Mysteries on Christianity, they seem familiar to us because our religious sentiment tends so naturally to the contemplation of death, and to death also the Mysteries seemed to refer. The immortality promised to the initiated is not very different from that expected by the Christian. Further, there was a special emphasis in the Mysteries on purification. This was naturally a ritual purification at first, but it had already in the fifth century developed into a spiritual or moral purification such as is often implied in Christianity. There is no need to argue as to origins; Christianity may have borrowed much from the Mysteries, but its ritual and belief on the points we have mentioned may be simply the result of the same human mind expressing the same needs.

These needs were at first material. The Mysteries concerned simply the growth of corn; but they soon became a source of thought about the

death which seemed to be the last act of life and yet the promise of new life ; and it was this element in them which had the greatest influence upon the philosophers. For life may be various, beautiful and under the patronage of many gods in its different episodes ; but life itself to the civilised man as well as to the savage, seems at certain moments to be dwarfed by the near presence of death. That great power stands somehow above all others ; and in any consideration as to the nature of the world or of man, death must be dealt with as an overwhelming fact.

Thou art more than the gods who number the days of our temporal breath ;
For these give labour and slumber ; but thou, Proserpina, death.
Therefore now at thy feet I abide for a season in silence. I know
I shall die as my fathers died, and sleep as they sleep : even so.
For the glass of the years is brittle wherein we gaze for a span ;
A little soul for a little bears up this corpse which is man.
So long I endure, no longer : and laugh not again, neither weep.
For there is no god found stronger than death ; and death is a sleep.

The poet does well to unite the Maiden of the Mysteries with that fine phrase of late religious philosophy : " Thou art a little soul bearing a corpse." The words are those of Epictetus ; and the spirit in which they were uttered may not unfairly be identified with that of the Mysteries in their highest development, when such men as Socrates, Plato and Aristotle knew them.

If we are to ask, then, what experience is chiefly referred to in the Mysteries, the reply must be that it

is the contemplation of death. Seeing what happens when the corn is cut, when the seed is planted, and when the new corn comes up; seeing also that we too die down like the corn,—men in all ages have reacted to such visions. In view of such crises they have performed their rituals, and as an expression of such issues they have conceived Demeter and Persephone. If their action to us seems futile and their creed false, we should not, therefore, suppose that either ritual or belief was without some ground in experience.

It may be as well to begin with an account of what was done in the Eleusinian Mysteries, although the details of the ceremony must be left as described in the usual authorities.[1] Our purpose is to discover the characteristic effect of the Mysteries upon Greek conceptions of life. By this means we shall emphasise one at least of the influences which give to discussions of personal immortality their peculiar importance in Plato. We shall understand why philosophers who rejected deities, spoke with respect of the Mysteries, and why even the early Christian Fathers condescended to an unusual politeness in their controversial violence when they referred to Eleusis.

The great feast was prepared for, during the fifth century, by the lesser Mysteries, held in the month Anthesterion. This was referred to as a "first purification," and it seems to have originated only when the Eleusinian Mysteries had already become very elaborate. In July ambassadors (σπονδηφόροι) went out to proclaim a sacred truce, as they did

[1] Farnell, *Cults;* Foucart, *Les Mystères*, etc.; J. Harrison, *Prolegomena;* Frazer, *Golden Bough. Spirits of the Corn and the Wild.*

before the Olympic games. The principle was the same and the effect probably as uncertain as that of the *Treuga Dei* during the Middle Ages. It is of importance, however, that in civilised times the Mysteries of Eleusis were recognised as specially sacred by the whole Greek world.

The actual festival was held after the harvest and probably at the time when rain was wanted for the sowing of the new corn.[1] It was an official glorification of what had once been a simple harvest festival such as is described by Theocritus.[2] The corn had been reaped, and men began to think of burying the seed for next year's corn, for even when in the fifth century the old basis of life in agriculture had been obscured by an elaborate civilisation, the many offerings of corn which came to Eleusis at this season must have turned the attention of the worshippers to the same sort of fact as that from which their forefathers had made the figure of the Corn-Mother. The festival began with a procession from Eleusis to Athens, in which certain sacred objects were conveyed to the Eleusinion under the Acropolis. This procession was met by the people of Athens; and it seems to be symbolic of the taking over by the city of Athens of the local Eleusinian harvest festival.[3] On the following day (the fifteenth of Boedromion) the King Archon spoke to the people gathered together in the Stoa

[1] Frazer, G. B. *Spirits of the Corn*, etc., p. 51, *seq.*

[2] Idyll VII.

[3] "Peace was made on these terms: the Eleusinians were to perform the mysteries by themselves but were in all other respects to be subject to the Athenians." Pausanias I. 38, 3. Eleusis was one of the twelve independent cities of Attica united by Theseus into a single state. The Eleusinion was specially sacred (Thucydides II. 17).

Poikile. He pronounced the sacred formula, to separate the unclean from those who might attend the Mysteries: "Whoever has not pure hands, whoever has not an intelligible tongue,[1] must not assist at the initiation." The day after was called "To the sea, Mystics," because of the procession, called a "driving out," from Athens to the sea. Each mystic took, or perhaps drove, a pig, and purified the pig and himself in the sea.[2] This purification was of immense importance, and the connected idea of "pollution" (μύσος) may actually have given the name to the Mysteries.[3] The pig was afterwards sacrificed; and the primitive element had of course become slightly ludicrous even to the devout, so that Aristophanes[4] can make his slave say:

> "O Virgin of Demeter, most blessed!
> What an entrancing smell of roasted pig!",

while the mystics march by singing.

On the two following days (17th and 18th) there was a festival of Asklepios, called the Epidauria, which was probably introduced about 421 B.C. and has no connection with the Mysteries. It is, however, of interest as thus placed, because it shows the flexibility of Athenian religious festivals and their power of development. So in the Octave of Christmas (between the Birth and the Circumcision of Christ) the Roman Church celebrates the festival of the Innocents, St. Thomas and St. Stephen. On the night of the nineteenth the great procession

[1] φωνὴν ἀσύνετος. *cf.* J. Harrison, *Prolegomena*, 151.
[2] The pig is used on Eleusinian coinage.
[3] *cf.* J. Harrison, *Prolegomena*, 154, as opposed to the old idea of the derivation from μύω.
[4] Frogs, 339.

of the purified went with the image of Iacchos from Athens to Eleusis.[1] Some went in carriages, but the more religious would walk; and they were to reach Eleusis at about midnight. All bore torches and the initiated wore wreaths of myrtle: and as they went they sang to Dionysus "Iacchos" and to the Maiden-Mother. "The sound you hear," says the speaker in Herodotus, "is the cry 'Iacchos' which they raise at this feast."[2]

We have a record of their hymns in Aristophanes; for the cry of the chorus in the *Frogs* is a ritual prayer; and in the same passage there is an address to Demeter and the Maiden.

Ch. Iacchos! Iacchos! Ho.
X. There, Master, there they are, the Initiated;
All sporting about as he told us we should find 'em.
They're singing in praise of Bacchus. . . .

Ch. Now let us raise in a different strain
The praise of the goddess the giver of grain,
Imploring her favour, with other behaviour
In manner more sober, submissive and graver.

Dionysus was a new-comer to the Eleusinian Mysteries, but as a god of enthusiasm he would be easily made to sympathise with the elements of religious revivalism which were always present in the service of the Mother-Maid of the Corn.[3]

The sacred road[4] which the procession followed is about twelve miles long. It was lined with tombs, and in the plain on either side were olive woods.

[1] They went first from the Eleusinion to the Iacchion and there put Iacchos on his car.
[2] *cf.* Herodotus, VIII., 65.
[3] *cf.* J. Harrison, *Prolegomena, loc. cit.*
[4] A book was written by Polemo, the antiquary, about this road.

Then the road rises up Mount Aegaleus and runs through a pass which is narrow, from the top of which one may look back over Athens, where the Parthenon stands out in the late evening "against a background of purple mountains."[1] The road then descends and we pass a shrine of Apollo on the left, after which the scene opens out and one may look through the hills to the sea. It is dark now, and on either side are tombs or little shrines at which sacrifice is made as the procession passes. On the right, a mile after the shrine of Apollo, is a sanctuary of Aphrodite.[2] Then one comes to the open plain by the shore; along which the road runs, with the hill-slopes on its right; and when the hills give space farther on one passes a group of salt-springs and a pool.[3] Here are tombs of heroes, and the place of famous battles of old time. The road, passing a last hill on the right, comes into the Thriasian plain, in which are fertile corn-lands, where "in spring and early summer the plain is gaily carpeted with anemones, red, purple and blue." All is now dark except where the streams shine under the autumn stars, and on our left is the wide gulf of Salamis with the island far off. In the plain the mystics were adorned by the Croconidæ, an Eleusinian family, with saffron bands on the right arm and left leg; and when Eleusis was reached the initiated and those about to be initiated wandered in the darkness with their torches, which was popularly

[1] Frazer, Note on Pausanias I. 36, 3. Other quotations below are from the same source.

[2] The ruins are extant, many inscriptions and some votive offerings. There was no large temple but only a small shrine in a rock-cut precinct. *cf.* Frazer on Pausanias I. 37, 7.

[3] The fishing in this was preserved by the priests of Eleusis.

supposed to be a commemoration of Demeter's search for Persephone.[1]

The day after the great procession at midnight, preparations were made for the initiation. There seems to have been some attempt at oral instruction either at the Lesser Mysteries or on the day preceding that of full initiation. In any case there was much said and done concerning purification, one of the most efficacious rites for which is fasting. On the 21st and 22nd the sacred drama was played in the hall of Initiation. Those who had been prepared[2] at the lesser Mysteries were admitted to the hall of Initiation. They passed, as Pausanias tells us, "a temple of Triptolemus, another of Artemis of the Portal and of Father Poseidon, and a well called Callichorum, where the Eleusinian women first danced and sang in honour of the goddess. They say that the Riarian plain was the first to be sown and the first to bear crops, and, therefore, it is their custom to take the sacrificial barley and to make the cakes for the sacrifices out of its produce. Here is shown what is called the threshing-floor of Triptolemus and the altar. But my dream forbade me to describe what is within the wall of the sanctuary; and surely it is clear that the uninitiated may not lawfully hear of that from the sight of which they are debarred."[3] But we know something at least of the secret which Pausanias thought it wrong to reveal. We may go on with the procession into the

[1] The torch may have originated in magic, as a sort of imitation sunshine, for the purpose of making the corn grow. *cf.* Frazer, G. B., *Spirits of Corn*, etc.

[2] The preparation is called μύησις, involving again the idea of purification. Those prepared are then called μύσται, until they become ἐπόπται at the Great Mysteries.

[3] Pausanias I. 38, 6, Frazer's Trans.

very precinct of the goddesses. Let us suppose we have passed the walls and, under the acropolis of the little town, come to the sanctuary. The building had been restored during the time of Pericles.[1] The rock is cut away, and a terrace formed on which are the shrines and the hall of the sanctuary. On the left of the great portal is the well mentioned above; and some fifty feet from this is a smaller portal, at the end of a passage between two walls.[2] There are signs that the original entrance was guarded by a strong tower. We pass a small temple of Pluto and a grotto "where are the gates of hell,"[3] and near it many shrines and votive statues. The initiated would be led by the mystagogue through the darkness among the various shrines of the outer sanctuary until they came to the hall of Initiation, a chamber about 170ft. square. The roof was "supported by six rows of columns, seven columns in each row," and round the hall were the steps "on which the initiated sat watching the performance of the mysteries which took place in the body of the hall. It is calculated that about 3,000 people could find room on them."[4]

The sacred place where only the priests might go was probably the centre of the hall, "which may have been screened by curtains from the spectators sitting in darkness on the tiers of seats that ran round it, till suddenly the curtains rose and revealed

[1] The old precinct had been ruined by the Persians in 480 B.C.

[2] 33 feet wide and 50 long.

[3] This, of course, is another traditional spot where Persephone was taken down. There were many such. Beside the Cephisus, a swift stream near Eleusis, is "a place called Erineus. They say that Pluto when he carried off the Maid, descended here." Pausanias I. 38, 5.

[4] Frazer, note on Pausanias I. 38, 6.

the vast hall brilliantly illumined,[1] with the gorgeously attired actors in the sacred drama moving mazily in solemn procession or giddy dance out and in among the forest of columns that rose from the floor of the hall, while the strains of grave or voluptuous music filled the air. Then, when all was over, the curtain would as suddenly descend, leaving the spectators in darkness and silence with nothing but the memory of the splendid pageant that had burst upon them and vanished like a dream."[2]

As for the drama, it involved two chief persons, Demeter and Persephone, and a third, Hades or Pluto, who was of subordinate importance. We do not know what was actually done; but the probability is that some form of sacred marriage was gone through. The characters were played by a priest and two priestesses of a sacred family; and they were assisted by heralds, torch-bearers and servants. After the marriage the announcement was made of the birth of a divine child.[3] The priest in the course of the ceremonies showed certain objects generally regarded as symbolic, among which was certainly a full ear of corn; and there was a communion, following the fast, by all the initiated, in which the kukeon [4] was drunk in commemoration of Demeter's having drunk it. Sacred objects were moved and perhaps tasted: and the initiated ended by pronouncing the formula "I am free."

On the 23rd two vessels (plenochoai) were emptied, one to the east, another to the west, while certain magic words were said; and "looking up to the

[1] The whole process was called "a leading into light."
[2] Frazer, *loc. cit.*, p. 510.
[3] *cf.* Lucian's parody in Alex. 38 and J. Harrison, Prol., 551.
[4] A sort of thick drink.

sky they cried ' Rain ! ' and looking down upon the earth they cried ' Be fruitful ! ' "[1] On the 24th the return to Athens took place. Especially on the bridge over the Cephisus there was a ritual cursing, and ribald jokes were made, the purpose of which, as of all ritual cursing, was, of course, the turning away of evil.

From such ceremonies, with all their crudities and all their beauties, arose the great figures of Demeter and her daughter. The ritual and perhaps even the drama in the lighted hall had existed before there was any myth of the loss of Persephone, the search of Demeter or the giving of corn. It was a harvest festival, and its purpose must clearly have been the promotion of fertility. The old corn gives the seed, and in the late summer, when the seed is dead and buried, men move about in procession, or dance and play, in order that the rain may come and the seed may grow. For this reason also they bear the torches in their wandering about the fields [2]

From this harvest festival came the contemplation of recurring birth and death ; and from this contemplation an aloofness which gave the initiated security as to his own fate. " Demeter who came to our country," says Isocrates,[3] " bestowed on us two priceless gifts : the cultivation of the fruits of the earth, which compelled us to leave the savage state, and the ceremony which brings to the initiated the sweetest consolation at death and the hope of eternity." And so in Aristophanes the immortal dead sing :—

[1] Proclus on Plato. *Timaeus*, 293.

[2] The candles in the Roman Church for the Purification and the Rogation Day processions are used like the torches of Demeter.

[3] Panegyricus ch. 28.

"Let us hasten—let us fly—
Where the lovely meadows lie;
Where the living waters flow;
Where the roses bloom and blow,
Heirs of Immortality,
Segregated, safe and pure
Easy, sorrowless, secure;
Since our earthly race is run
We behold a brighter sun.
Holy tunes—a holy vow—
Such rewards await them now."[1]

"The hope of eternity" became in minds of grosser make a mere guide-book knowledge of the underworld, which would preserve them from the dangers of the journey after death. And especially in the decadence of Athenian religion and in the revivalism connected with the name of Orpheus, the world of after-death was described in a sort of poetical physical geography. Immortality then depended on a mere dodging of demons or avoidance of obstacles and the sacred knowledge (γνῶσις) was a mere memory of formulas.[2]

But to poets the truth was not less cogent because it was less exactly stated. "Happy is he," says Pindar, "who has seen these things before leaving the world; he realises the end and the beginning of life as ordained by Zeus."[3] And Sophocles declares that "Those are thrice-blessed who have seen these rites before their descent into Hades: for they only will have a future life—the rest will find nothing but pain."[4] Thus to those who were not mere bearers of the symbol but really possessed of the

[1] Frogs, 568 *sq.*

[2] The Orphic tablets given in J. Harrison's *Prolegomena* are proof enough of crude thought.

[3] Pindar, Frag. 137. Clement of Alexandria says (Str. III. 578) that this refers to the Eleusinia.

[4] Soph. Fragm. No. 753 (Nauck).

god, the old Corn-Mother or the Maiden-shoot of early corn have given place to the majesty of the mourning Demeter and the Queen of the Underworld.

The process of thought is clear: Demeter and Persephone are both the life-force of the corn.[1] The Mother is the full ear, the daughter is the seed which is committed to earth as are the dead.[2] And with the yellow corn the poppies grow: with the support of life appears the gift of sleep, which is twin-brother of death.[3] The goddesses are at once the corn itself and the powers outside the corn which give life, the dead and buried seed and from it life again. For the corn gives us our life; and indeed all life seems to run in an unending cycle from birth to death and death to birth. So the goddess Seed-of-the-Corn who dwells in darkness becomes she who waits for us all and gives the sleep which is death.

"The Greeks of an earlier age," says Pausanias, "esteemed the Eleusinian mysteries as much superior to all other religious exercises as they esteemed gods superior to heroes."[4] And we can see some reason in the judgment, even though it expresses in part the prejudices of Pausanias himself. There

[1] The corn was chiefly barley. Ceres (Demeter) is the soul of Cereals. *cf.* Ovid. F. IV. 673.

Officium commune Ceres et Terra tuentur;
Haec praebet *causam* frugibus, illa locum.

[2] In reaping "the sturdy swains cleave Demeter limb from limb"; quoted in Plut. Isis., 66. Unripe corn is called "Green Demeter."

[3] Thus Demeter-Persephone holds in her hand sheaves of barley and poppies; *cf.* the excellent passage on corn and poppies in Frazer, *Spirits of the corn and the wild.*

[4] Paus. X. 31, 80. In a passage about a picture representing "those who held the Eleusinian Mysteries of no account."

was experience enough in the ritual and beauty enough in the legend to transform the conception of life itself.

Coming therefore to its effect on ideals of life and character, we should say that this part of Athenian religion chiefly influenced the conceptions (1) of moral purity and (2) of the nature of the soul or mind. We have allowed for the existence of literalists and crude intelligences in Athens, but after all it was not these who made and developed the Athenian ideals of life and character. The finer few, as Aristotle says, were changed for the rest of their lives by what they saw at Eleusis, and these few made Athens. Their standard of values would be exalted by a magnificent social experience: for, first, even here we must notice the social quality of Greek Religion. Even in the Eleusinia the *polis* is active: and from the Eleusinia one derives one's experience of what the *polis* can do. But, secondly, in this part of Athenian religion the individual appears as a unit of experience. He is not merely a celebrant in the ritual: he has by initiation become the very subject of the whole process—in the sense that he might feel in the Eleusinia, more than in any other of the ceremonies of the *polis*, that the myth was really about him. Death in the Eleusinia is not the death of others, which is so often the source of primitive and formless deities. It is the death of ourselves. The primitive man, seeing the departure of something from the body of dying friend or enemy, at first makes no application to himself of what he believes to occur to others. He does not realise his own fate in the vision of death. He fears the ghost of the dead man, but hardly perceives that he is himself a ghost. When,

however, men see as a fact the inevitability of their own death, they react to that vision in a transformation of the old ritual of the corn. They "whisper to themselves as it were" of the nature of the powers which govern them in these issues; and the result is Demeter-Persephone. They are free. For they perceive that they are something other than their bodies, and the ritual purifications have become "temperance and justice and courage and wisdom itself" in the true philosophy "And I fancy that the men who established our mysteries," as Socrates says,[1] "had a very real meaning: in truth they have been telling us in parables all the time that whoever comes to death uninitiated and profane, will be in the mire; while he that has been purified and initiated shall dwell with the gods. 'For the thyrsus-bearers are many' as they say in the mysteries, 'but the inspired few.' And by these last are meant, I believe, only the true philosophers." It was not, therefore, by argument but by Athenian experience that the Socratic idea of life was formed.

In the continual interaction of Death and Life, of things decaying and things growing, the ἄνοδος and κάθοδος, the anabolism and catabolism of modern science, there is a source for all kinds of speculation and the occasion for all kinds of action. In this seeming contest between two forces, the shadow of death sometimes falls upon the whole of life, giving birth to religions of gloom and pessimistic philosophy; and sometimes the light of life takes from death itself all darkness, producing a religion of joy and an optimistic philosophy. The religious temperament of the race

[1] Phaedo, 69.

influences the thought of its great men, when philosophy begins; and either death or life is the object of chief attention.

It would be false to call Athenian religion either gloomy or joyous: for all religions preserve the characteristics of the race which produced them, and the Athenians were not continuously either joyful or gloomy. The different moods of the individual or of a race appear in their natural temperaments; and if moods are unchanged, the result is madness. But the Athenians least of all would have permitted their changing moods to have become fixed; and perhaps they may truly be said to have been sane enough to preserve both gladness and sorrow. They had accesses of terrible fear, and moments of unrestrained joy, and so in their religion one may find traces of both moods, depths of gloom and transports of joy, vivid reactions to the changing drama of life. On the whole, however, we may assert that in the Mysteries the genius of the Athenians made the light of life overcome the gloom of death. The burying of the seed was always to them a hope of resurrection. The circumstance which gives darkness to life, the disappearance of what we hold valuable, was thus transformed by the religious imagination which saw in all death the promise of a new life. For the buried seed lives again. The analogy may be futile, since the individual which dies is clearly not the individual which rises again; but the general tendency was in the direction of lifting the gloom from death. And morally this was of value. We may use the fact of death as evidence as to the nature of life, and Plato at least never neglects such evidence. Indeed he makes Socrates say that the whole of life is but

a preparation for death.[1] But we do not know either what life is or what death is: and it is just as reasonable to use the fact of life as evidence as to the nature of death. This, perhaps, is the dominant tendency in Athenian thought. This is the meaning of the interest in what is called immortality, and this gives force to the saying of Spinoza, "Liber homo de nulla re minus cogitat quam de morte." Those who are interested chiefly in life with all its intricacy and variety, tend, when death is forced upon their notice, to explain it to themselves in the terms of life: and on the other hand those who are abnormally sensitive to death and spend much time in thinking of its causes and consequences, tend, when they are forced to consider any crisis in life, to explain it by reference to death.

The Athenian tradition in the Eleusinia, then, colours the Athenian conception of moral greatness and of the worth of life. It does not blind the Athenians to the near presence of death to every man, nor does it make any man less lonely in that part of his fate in which no man can have assistance from any other. But it prepares a moral atmosphere in which the calm and serenity of Socrates could find a place as well as the more restricted moral ready-reckoning of Aristotle. Both are Athenian and the source of a great part of the thought of both is to be found in the religious tradition of Athens.

[1] Phaedo, 67: "In life he has been preparing himself to live as nearly in a state of death as possible."

CHAPTER VI

POLITICS

In our sense of the word, politics is confined to the interest in law and government, and it excludes any reference to religion, to various spheres of morality, and to all those aesthetic interests in drama, architecture, music and sculpture—all of which were in the Greek sense of the word, political. There was no clear distinction to the Athenian mind between the service of the *polis* in its festivals and in its law-courts. The purely religious, in our sense, was connected with the purely political, again in our sense, by the fact that many public offices combined duties of both kinds, that festivals were often diplomatic occasions, and that even legal business was never wholly dissociated from a reference to divine powers.[1] Architecture and drama were of political importance, and the general progress of intelligence could not be clearly separated from the methods of suppressing crime or organising trade. Hence Plato makes the statesman, as we unwisely translate his word, deal with details of education, and Aristotle can even go so far as to give him a veto on playing the flute.

But the restricted meaning of the word political was not unknown to the Greeks, especially after the fifth century. Aristotle distinguishes the priest-

[1] *cf.* Lysias, on the Sacred Olive.

hood from political offices : [1] Plato means by the *politicos* chiefly the administrator in law and government.[2] And even in the historians one can see indications of the severance which was beginning to be recognised between what we should call the religious and the secular. For the *polis* was a living and therefore changing institution ; and it was moving, as all such institutions do, from a primitive and complex function towards a state of things in which each interest of human life is represented by a distinct method of organisation or action. The social life we have so far studied, as giving its character to the *polis* was, in the fifth century, already an ancient tradition. It was beginning to be obvious that for law and administration a special attention and special organisations were needed. And there were already some who thought that the most important affairs of the *polis* were not those which had reference to the gods. Even art was claiming a special attention from connoisseurs which could no longer be given equally by all the members of the *polis*. Voluntary societies (θίασοι) appeared : and drama, still in the service of the Athenian *polis*, was in fact international.

Law and administration were, on the other hand, a special department of life ; and the *polis* was, therefore, in one of its meanings political in our sense of the word. That is to say, it was the name given to society when organised and administered according to law. For our purpose here, then, we contrast such a meaning with that in which the word *polis* is used to refer to a society with special relations to divine powers ; and we must now discuss

[1] *Politics* 1299*a*.

[2] *Theatetus*, 178 : Even in the *Republic* the interest is predominantly administrative.

only that side of the Greek ideal which is, in our sense of the word, political.

But we should not fully understand the Greek conception of politics if we did not allow that the *polis* was once a fortress and the *polites* a soldier. In fact, law and administration, as in all primitive society, still bore traces of their origin in military organisation. To some historians this seems the fundamental fact; and they have subordinated the religious union in festivals to the union for defence. In this they seem to follow the judgment of Aristotle, where he says that the *polis* comes into existence for the protection of life. But in the matter of origins it is difficult to say that any social bond was felt before the religious. The life for which Aristotle says the *polis* first existed was endangered much more by lack of food and by natural conditions than by human enemies; and religion is the earliest method of contending with or controlling nature. Therefore, even according to Aristotle, we might explain the *polis* as primarily religious. And secondly, whatever the origin of the sense of the *polis*, in the fifth century (except for Sparta) Greek social life was not predominantly military. The Greek was indeed a soldier; but even that word is misleading. For he was not a professional specialist. In the convulsive activities of war he was an energetic amateur; and hopelessly so, because in many instances he was also a man of affairs, a literary and dramatic critic and a mill-owner or a landlord. We shall therefore suppose that the defensive organisation on which the administration of the *polis* was based was to the Greek mind secondary. But this does not mean that it was unimportant. The state was always imagined as a ship in the midst

of surrounding waves of barbarism : and the danger to the whole of civilisation gave a great importance to military measures. By a natural exaggeration of this, every little Greek city thought, as every state does still, that if its peculiar form of law and administration disappeared, civilisation itself would be ruined.

Our subject must now be defined by reference to Athens in the fifth century, because the most characteristic or most influential political life was developed there. But it would be unfair to Greek political thought and activity if other parts of Hellas were not at least referred to in passing. For Athens did not develop in a political vacuum, and, in fact, one of the most important facts about Greek political experience is its immense variety. No other race can show in so short a period so many types of administration and legislation. There was everything from extreme autocracy to mob-rule. And, more than this, the various kinds of autocracy or of any other form of administration seem all to have been tested : monarchy, " tyranny " constitutional or personal and capricious, can be found ; and so can limited and unlimited rule of " the many." The governing political tendencies, however, appear in Greek history most clearly through the opposition of Sparta and Athens. Both are Greek in emphasising the religious basis of society and in the conception of law as flexible and personal. But there is a broad distinction which appeared supremely important to the contemporary Greek world. The speech of the Corinthians in Thucydides gives the approved view, as fairly stated as we can expect in a report of an attack on Athens written by an Athenian of the old political school.[1] The contrast runs thus :

[1] Thuc. I. 68 *sq.*

Athenians are quick, changeable, adventurous, never disheartened, reckless of lives in public service and insatiably energetic. The Lacedæmonians are careful, over conservative, home-staying, not easily stirred to far-reaching schemes and too much enamoured of a quiet time. Even in institutions this contrast of character shows itself; for Athens is always being organised on a new model and Sparta remains the same.

Of Sparta we cannot fairly speak here: since an analysis of its political good and evil is beyond our present purview.[1] But Sparta was an influence in the formation of some political ideals: and the admiration for her ruthless organisation was widespread. It has come down to us in Plato and Xenophon. Not even this, however, makes Sparta typically Greek. Its organisation was directed to military domination by the only means such domination can use, force and fraud: and its political primitiveness is in part a cause of the entire absence of any Spartan art or science. So barren a life as this perfect organisation attained can hardly be treated as anything but a violation of all that was most ideally Greek: and therefore we turn to Athens.

We shall speak now only of the conceptions of law and liberty as far as they can be discovered in the common actions of Athenian life, omitting for the present the enthusiasms of fifth century literature and the more studied suggestions of the philosophers. For, in the very structure of Athenian law and administration we may discover aims and ambitions. It is true that the ideals implied would not be clear to the average man, even if he were

[1] *cf.* Pollock., Introd. to Pol. Science, p. 11, note.

assiduous in his attendance at the Assembly or the law-courts. He might answer to the appeal of dramatists or historians or even philosophers. He might say that their sentiment had been his all the time. And although he would not be able to express for himself any clear conception of democracy, of established government, or of personal liberty, he may be truly said to have been moved by ideals.

The leading political ideal of Athens was *liberty*. In the first place this meant *autonomy* for the group; and in this meaning it was an ideal which was universal in Greece. It corresponds in its good, as well as its evil effects, with our conception of state-sovereignty. It is based upon the fact that in early times no relation of two groups is possible which is not the subordination of one to the other. This relation, which is based simply upon comparative force is, in that far, not moral; and therefore the first political enthusiasm is a revolt against the dominance of mere force. In this sense liberty is the first cry of a new world—the world of administrative organisation, which we now call political. But in the appeal against predominant force, other force is used; and the original conception of justice is forgotten. So far as the ideal of autonomy involves a policy of the group with respect to other groups it is simply exclusive or in the more polite term "defensive," originating in exclusiveness and causing an isolation which was, in the end, the curse of Greek political life. But in its beginning autonomy is a noble ambition. It expresses the desire of a group to carry to their full development the character and intelligence which is common among them and distinct from that of their neighbours.

We need not quote the well-known references in

Herodotus to the position of Athens, both as gaining for herself liberty against Persia and as being the "Saviour of Greece." [1] No group of men has ever undervalued their own autonomy so long as they had it; but many groups have parted with autonomy easily, and most have not understood its meaning so clearly as the Greeks did. In this sense the ideal is Greek—that it is conscious. And further, not only did each city fight for its own independence but the hypothesis of inter-state policy in Greece was the mutual independence of the cities. The value of local autonomy may even be said to have been exaggerated by the Greeks. And even when local independence obviously did not exist, it was possible for Greeks to pretend that it did.[2]

There is no doubt of the genuineness of the belief in Athens that the domination of Athens over two hundred and fifty other cities was all for liberty. The cities of the "alliance" were devoutly imagined to be at least willing if not enthusiastic. They were presumed by the dominant partner to see the immense advantage, for their own "true liberty," of subordination in fact to Athens. And the phenomenon is not without parallel in modern times. The affection of a dominant group for liberty, or of an imperial organisation for national differences, has indeed provoked the laughter of cynics, and it is perhaps laughable. But it is not generally hypocritical. The majority of men think that although no other group would provide good governors for their own countrymen, yet their countrymen are admirably fitted to govern other groups.

Thus, even in the actual practice of a despotic

[1] Herodotus VII. 139.
[2] *cf.* Zimmern, G.C., ch. VII., p. 175 *sq.*

form of "imperialism," the people of Athens still held to the idea of autonomy. They paid at least lip-service to the common desire of all Greeks, and confessed even in their blindness to facts that the liberty of every group to develop the character of its own members was the foundation of political life.

There was no lack of "real politik" in Athens. Thrasymachus in the *Republic*, Callicles in the *Gorgias* and Cleon in Thucydides and Aristophanes, all stand for the idea that in actual fact men are governed by fear and force, and that this actual fact is what ought to be supported and developed. The Greeks, and especially the Athenians, saw clearly enough that because force was used to repel force it might be argued that the only relation of groups was that of comparative force. But another principle in inter-state relations was not without expression. Indeed, we have in Thucydides a definite statement of an attitude in political theory which has hardly been improved upon. Diodotus, replying to Cleon on the question of using fear to control the allies, particularly with reference to the conquered people of Mitylene, urges that fear caused by the use of overwhelming force is not the best basis for stable relations between groups. Prudence and a sane perception of facts, even without any reference to justice, go to show that "forgiveness is in the public interest." [1] But this positive and constructive policy was never grasped either by the weaker or the stronger cities.

And as a matter of fact, the ideal of local autonomy, in spite of the action of every Greek city which became powerful enough to oppose it, remained

[1] Thucydides III. 36, 41.

embodied in the separatism of Greek politics. No other part of the world can show so many independent and fully developed units of government in so restricted a space as Greece. For it was the ideal of these people that every group of about one hundred thousand free men inhabiting, with their dependants, about the area of an English county, should be organised independently and absolutely. They more nearly achieved, at least for a short time, this ideal than any other: and the very achievement proved the limitations of the conception, even for a primitive period of economic and intellectual development. Attempts were, indeed, made to prevent the isolation of states which naturally followed from the ideal of local autonomy. There was, in the first place, the ancient tradition of Hellenic unity imagined in Homer and embodied in the games. The Greek cities never quite forgot their common interest; even though no positive policy was based upon it. For here, as in the spirit of the separate *polis*, religious festivals pointed a way. In the Homeric hymn to the Delian Apollo we have the record of a gathering in early times of many different "civic" units. The Ionians are represented as the sharers of a common interest. And in historical Greece all those we now call Greeks had a share in four festivals, which embodied and expressed a sentiment of union more inclusive than the *polis*. The Olympian, the Pythian, the Isthmian and the Nemean games were opportunities for a new politics: and they may have been actually developed with a political intention.[1] At Olympia, for example,

[1] The dates of supposed or actual establishment of these games are: Olympian, 776; Pythian, 586; Isthmian, 582; Nemean, 573 B.C.

every fourth year representatives and private pilgrims met, from all the Greek cities. Heralds, sent out from Elis, proclaimed the sacred truce which for a moment stilled the evil bickerings of the Greek cities. Embassies were sent to Olympia : and there, besides athletic contests and literary recitations, sacrifices and intercourse kept at least a vague conception of Greek unity alive.

Secondly, there was always a number of citizens in different states who suggested a policy of federation, or at least, of close Hellenic alliance. Aristophanes, in his peace dramas, cannot have spoken for himself alone when he suggested that Greeks should not continue to destroy one another. The Homeric literature was used as an argument for common action by all Greeks. Sophists, like Gorgias, Lysias and Isocrates, at the great festivals, continually urged the political union of Greek cities : and from time to time when the obvious inadequacy of the ideal of local autonomy was proved by the destruction of city after city, even the average man seems to have felt a vague desire for some other ideal to correct it. Tradition and religious sentiment pointed the way, but the Greeks were unable to follow it by political action. The Hegelian idea that what did occur must have occurred is misleading. For there was at one time the possibility of a union between Greek cities which would not have destroyed local autonomy. The sentiment was there but practical ability was lacking ; and the best of good intentions is useless in politics unless accompanied by a clear perception of fact and a capacity for imagining practical programmes.

There was, besides the ideal of local autonomy, the ideal of co-ordination of equals. But as the whole

world knows, these two ideals, which might have been complementary, were never reconciled. The ideal of local autonomy divided Greece so effectively that hardly, even in face of a common enemy, could Greek cities be united; and on the other hand when at last Greece was united by force, it was only by the suppression of all local autonomy which did not confine itself to supervision of the parish pump. We need not carry the history of events into detail; but we may compare the bold utterance of Demosthenes with the submissiveness of Plutarch when local autonomy was altogether lost. "Pericles," he says, "reminded himself that he governed freemen. Now the Roman shoe is on our heads:" and he goes on complacently to record his embassy to a kindly proconsul.[1] But this miserable conclusion was not due to moral weakness or to the decay of civic patriotism, upon which the commentators, who are persuaded by Demosthenes, have delighted to enlarge.[2] Ideals do not always fail because men are ignoble or decadent, but sometimes because the ideals themselves are mistaken or at least exaggerated. Local autonomy in the Greek sense involved the denial of facts to which the Greeks were somewhat blind—the interdependence of the cities in trade, in industry and in general culture. But on the other hand the political ideal of a Hellenic unity, which should have embodied these facts, was altogether too sentimental and indefinite. The result was that

[1] Political Precepts, 17, 20.

[2] It may be that Greece at some date was morally decadent. Even that may have been an effect rather than a cause of political misconceptions. The point is that the sudden disappearance of Greek independence was due to mistaken intellectual judgment of facts and not to vice.

the effective, but more limited, ideal destroyed the Greek world.[1]

The Greek ideal of liberty, however, meant not only autonomy, but also a certain possibility of action for individuals: and this was regarded as peculiarly Greek. Their tradition said that Artabanus remarked to Themistocles—"Some think one thing valuable, some another. With you it is said to be liberty and equality. We regard it as essential to adore in the king, the image of deity."[2] Herodotus says that the Athenians became powerful when they rid themselves of tyrants: Aeschylus represents the Persians as astonished that Athenians serve no master: Thucydides declares that in Athens "we are not angry with a neighbour for following the bent of his own humour; and in private life we converse without diffidence."[3] Aristotle distinguishes Hellenes from barbarians by saying that Hellenes understand personal freedom;[4] and he distinguishes democracies from other forms of government, as Herodotus had done before him,[5] by saying that chiefly in democracies individual liberty and equality are to be found.[6] And, in this sense, democracy is evidently conceived to be peculiar to Greeks.

Further quotation, however, is unnecessary, since it is generally recognised that some sort of personal liberty was valued in Greece, although some have supposed the Greeks not to have meant

[1] *cf.* below p. 256 on the idea of Hellenic unity hinted at in Plato (Rep. 469) and Aristotle (Pol. 1327*b*).

[2] Plutarch, Themistocles.

[3] Thuc. II. 42.

[4] Pol. 1255*a*. "Hellenes do not like to be called slaves but confine the name to barbarians."

[5] Herodotus III. 80.

[6] Pol. 1291*b*.

what we mean when we use the words. It is essential, therefore, that we should be clear as to the likeness and the distinction between ancient and modern ideas of individual liberty.

The Greek conception of individual liberty must be defined by reference to two complementary conceptions. First, it is aristocratic, and therefore an ideal of a few only: and, secondly, it is opposed by an ideal of civic patriotism. As for the first point, few Greeks reached the conception of a fundamental likeness between all human beings, including women, slaves and barbarians at large, upon which could be based equal political rights.[1] There were vague beginnings of a new ideal in Athens, but even in Athens personal liberty, such as is now connected with the word democracy, was confined to a very small percentage of the population. And this was not only a fact; it was a situation accepted as desirable, and therefore, an ideal. For the Greeks felt that few were capable of attaining that full development which they expected of man. In this we may perceive the strange realism with which the Greeks conceived their ideals. We are often satisfied to admire the unattainable: but they were much impressed by the conditions within which alone any ideal could be realised. It was perfectly clear to them that for the higher development of human faculty, much drudgery or mechanical work was necessary. Society cannot consist of artists and critics, for food and clothing must be supplied. It seemed essential, then, that liberty and equality should only be the

[1] Some Sophists preached the equality of all men. Socrates and Plato understood it. Euripides felt it. But Aristotle is the mouthpiece of the average man in his defence of "natural" slavery and the "natural" incompetence of women.

right of a few males. Women had to work at child-bearing; and this went well with house-keeping. Slaves and working-men had no time and no developed capacity for the "good life." Except for some revolutionaries, therefore, the Greeks (slaves and women, as well as the few who benefited) accepted an aristocratic conception of liberty.

Modern idealists wax eloquent upon this grave deficiency in the Greek ideal, and it was indeed due to inexcusable lack of imagination. But the modern lack of imagination is even greater; for it seems to involve an incurable blindness to fact. The political theorist talks of personal liberty as an ideal for all, while the majority are still enslaved, and while the very conditions which make it possible for him to theorise are degrading women into animals and working populations into machines. At least the Greeks had imagination enough to see what other people were doing; and a touch of realism is no bad thing in a vision of the ideal. We cannot condemn the Greek ideal without accusing ourselves; until we have been able to devise some method by which the many shall not be sacrificed to the development of the few. And if we allow for the limitations of their ideal, we must also allow for the positive purpose of the Greeks. It was supposed by them that the few individuals who could be, ought to be free not merely to follow their own bent but to develop the highest excellencies of body and spirit. True liberty as a means to a great life was first understood by contrast with slavery.[1]

As for the second part of our delimitation of

[1] *cf.* Ritchie, *Natural Rights*, p. 248: "It was in contrast with the subject and the slave that men first felt themselves equal and free."

liberty, the *polis* was undoubtedly always before the eyes of the Greek. The greatest lover of individual independence felt the whole life of society as a reality which he could not but admire and develop. Therefore "civic patriotism" or devotion to the *polis* is often held to have been a much more characteristically Greek ideal than that of individual liberty. If we suppose this to be true, it is still *liberty* for which the Greeks stood in politics: but liberty would then mean only autonomy or liberty of the group, which subordinated individual independence to itself. The comparative importance to Greeks, however, of the two conceptions must be interpreted differently by those who read the evidence differently. And here we shall suppose that individual independence was just as much a Greek ideal as local autonomy. This would imply, first, that Sparta was not typically Greek. Even if the majority of Greek cities were organised on a plan of which Sparta was only an exaggeration, yet the domination of a small group over the majority was not what distinguishes Greece from other countries. And again, the intention of the Spartan organisation was certainly not to produce that high emotional and intellectual activity which we are generally agreed to view as a Greek ideal. But, secondly, our view would imply that the continual revolutions of Greek city-politics were due to the pursuit of an ideal, and were not merely fallings from grace. The literature of Greece is the mind of the anti-revolutionaries; the history of Greece is the record of στάσεις; and there is no reason why we should accept that view of the Greeks which is most prominently expressed by their literary men.

The history of Greece is not so much a history of contending states as a history of contending political parties, representing opposed economic interests to which the frontiers of the state made little difference. And the aim of every party was the full and free activity of its individual members. Thus, in the history of Greece the conception of individual independence was so powerful as to be destructive; and even the social sense of the *polis* was unable to resist the desire of the few for a full and free development. There is still a persistent superstition among literary men that the opposite to what is fantastically called "civic patriotism" is egoistic selfishness; but there are, in fact, many other possibilities; for a man may be devoted to a quite healthy ideal of personal development, or of general human service, or of economic common interest. And these are not mere fallings from grace, but other ways to the "good life."

On the whole, however, the Greeks never reached a very clear conception of the relation of the individual to political institutions. They had behind them, in the not very distant past, the complete submergence of the personality in the group, which is characteristic of primitive society. They were also aware that every man thinks his own customs the best. "If any one should propose to all men to select the best institutions of all that exist, each, after considering them all, would chose their own, so certain is it that each thinks his own institutions by far the best. That all men are of this mind respecting their own institutions may be inferred from many and varied proofs and among them from the following. Darius, having summoned some Greeks under his sway, who were present,

asked them for what sum they would feed upon the dead bodies of their parents. They answered that they would not do it for any sum. Darius afterwards having summoned some of the Indians called Callatians, who are accustomed to eat their parents, asked them in the presence of the Greeks, who were informed of what was said by an interpreter, for what sum they would consent to burn their fathers when they die. But they loudly besought him not to mention such things. Such is the effect of custom. And Pindar seems to me to have said rightly that custom is the king of all men."[1] The Greeks took their established institutions perhaps with a greater docility than is usual among the more educated of us moderns; but they never were oppressed by that civic patriotism, which in the fantastic solemnity of recent historians and commentators appears as a Moloch devouring all individuality.

For the further understanding, however, of Greek political liberty the Greek conception of law must be discussed. Even in Greece law was conceived as a *limitation* of liberty. "Though free," says Herodotus, "they are not absolutely free; for they have a master over them,—the law."[2] And the devotion of the critical Socrates to the laws of Athens has become notorious. But we should be mistaken if we imagined that to the Greeks civil law seemed to be anything like our civil law; and we should be still more mistaken if we thought the Greek devotion to law was in contradiction to their ideal of liberty.

It has often been remarked as characteristic of Greek morality in general and of Greek politics in particular, that there is an absence of legal codes.

[1] Herodotus III. 38. [2] id. VII. 104.

No moral *law* was ever formulated in the Greek tradition; for the essence of morality to them was life and life could not be codified. Therefore, even in that part of morality which is called politics, the necessity for certainty and precision in principles never compelled the Greeks to think of law as we do. So far as facts go, written constitutions were few in Greece. The laws which were cited, in the courts of Athens, for example, were dealt with quite freely according to their spirit and not legally interpreted as we expect of modern law. Hence law meant rather a spirit than a formula; and not even the traditional view among us of the British Constitution implies quite such vital law.

Secondly, the Greek attitude towards law is quite different from ours or from the Roman; for law was to them a living and changing thing, and almost a human being. The language of Socrates in the *Crito* or of Demosthenes in his private orations is not metaphorical; for to the Athenians "the laws" were, as we may put it, plastically conceived. They were Athens, and Athens was Athena. As we find it difficult to feel the reality of Demeter so we find it difficult to envisage that "Doom" which is as real and has as definite a character as any living person. Thirdly, the explanations given of the nature of law show how impossible it is to suppose that there was any real contrast in the Greek mind between law and liberty. "Law," says Aristotle, "is reason without passion;"[1] it has, that is to say, all that is valuable in personality without the caprice against which "liberty" was a protest. It is, in the absence of passion, not a hindrance but a security for liberty; since what obstructs,

[1] Pol. 1286*a*.

according to the Greek mind, is not reason, but emotion.

And the historical theory of law which was generally held in Greece points to the same fact. The law-giver was believed to be the most important person in the making of the *polis*. The highest law, that is to say, had a quite personal and individual source and bore on it the marks of his character and mind. But the law-giver is spoken of as giving evidence, collecting traditions and foreign ideas, and then making general conclusions. The Greeks never conceived him as an authority different in kind from themselves. He gave not commands but conclusions.

" The law," says Aristotle, stating the experience of the past, " has a compulsory power ; but whereas we take offence at individuals who oppose our inclinations, even though their opposition is right, we do not feel aggrieved when the law bids us to do right." Control there must be in society, or, indeed, even in individual life, if there is to be any order, but there is something, obviously, in the Greek conception of law which prevents any such conception as that of Mill where he says that we are " hindered " by it. Not because the Greeks were less individualistic, but because their social system was more plastic,—therefore they never felt law as oppressive. The conclusion is obvious. The legal and administrative system called the *polis* was fundamentally different from any modern state and even from the so-called city-state of the Romans. To confound the Athenian and the Roman attitude towards the state or even to confuse the Athenian with the Roman state-system, is much worse than calling Zeus, Jupiter, or Athena, Minerva. And as

for our modern state, both in spirit and in administration or organisation (even in the strictly political sense), the *polis* bears little resemblance to it. There is a likeness between the Athenian conception of law and the English idea of the British Constitution; but not even the British Constitution has that flexible personality which was quite definitely imagined by the Athenians to belong to their *polis*. In the ideal of political experience, in rigidity of law in the British Empire and in that peculiar phenomenon called "red tape," we are far indeed from the comparative formlessness of the Athenian system. It would be utterly absurd, then, to suppose that we can model our attitude towards the modern state upon the Athenian practice or theory of the *polis*.

But if all the political effort of Athens was for the maintenance of law and liberty, what means did they choose? They set themselves to form *institutions* which would secure them against the caprice of individuals. That is the solution of the apparent contradiction between the desire for personal liberty and the complete subordination of the individual to the *polis*. Both are Greek; and both are due to the same ideal, which is liberty. But some historians, having in view quite modern circumstances, cannot imagine why the Greeks should have submitted themselves almost with religious enthusiasm to the "laws" and yet believed themselves to be free. These historians have either underrated the Greek reverence for law; or they have supposed that the Greeks did not love liberty as we do. It is a mistake. The fact is that the danger to liberty in the Greek world, as in all quasi-primitive worlds, was *personal*. It was the dominance of definite men which was the chief menace to individual

freedom. "When freed *from tyrants*," says Herodotus, "the Athenians became by far the first,"[1] and we notice that Plato and Aristotle never dream of any hindrance to one person's liberty which is not the will of some other person. The danger of institutionalism was then unknown.

So also, in the Middle Ages the "freedom of the city" meant the security from the caprice of a local lord. What men wanted was law, because the alternative was personal passion or at least personal opinion: and so liberty was identified with "the rule of law." Now, the political situation is almost completely reversed, except in the corners of the world.[2] Institutions have become so powerful that some cry out against them for a return to personal rule. The vast business organisations and the complex officialism of the state are to us the chief obstacles to personal and independent or spontaneous life. Society, we say, has been dehumanised; and revolutionaries such as Proudhon look to the "defatalisation" of life. The very institutions which we have built up to secure us against violent personalities have now begun to subdue to their own existence the spontaneous life for which alone they were called into being. The state suppresses the individual's choice; the church kills enthusiasm; the art academy destroys art.

Hence come the great differences between the ancient and modern ideals of liberty. (*a*) To them liberty meant the possibility of a direct individual share in public activities; to us it more usually

[1] Herodotus V. 78. Thucydides I. 17.

[2] Exactly the same situation as the Greek may be observed in some Western cities of the United States, where "law" is the aim of liberty as against the capricious rule of a political "boss."

means the possibility of avoiding the political absorption of the individual. (*b*) To them liberty seemed to be obstructed by an ancient group-tradition; to us its obstacle is a new and increasing regulation. (*c*) To them liberty is conceived only in one form—a complex of political, religious, intellectual and economic life. To us, liberty has many different meanings in the different social relations of men. And finally, as we have shown (*d*) in ancient times liberty is opposed to personal dominance; in modern times it is opposed to institutionalism. Against different evils the same fundamental ideal is found to be active; and in spite of all its ephemeral features, we may still conceive the Athenian ideal of liberty to imply essentially the same desire as ours. The very distinctions prove the identity of the two ideals in their apparently opposed forms. To them the more *polis* the better, to us the less state the better. What has changed, however, is not the conception of liberty but the sphere of politics, or the meaning we give to what the Athenians called the *polis* and we call the state. Liberty still means, as it meant in fifth century Athens, the full development of capacities. But in Athens all the interests of life, —drama, music, sculpture, philosophy and religion, were to be found in the use of one institution, the *polis*. In our time, if we gave to what we call the state what the Athenian gave to his *polis*, we should lack all other interests but what we call the political. No Panathenaia, no Dionysia should we share; and if we were satisfied with only what we could get from the modern state we should indeed lack liberty. We therefore seek, in restricting the state, the fulness of life which the Athenians sought in extend-

ing the dominance of the *polis*. Or, to put it the other way, the Athenians (if we allow for the natural indefiniteness of the feeling for individuality in an earlier time) were individualists in the same sense that all sane men are, having as their ideal not ease of government, but the fullest development of the individual's life. And this could only be had by institutionalising a society as yet too unorganised; but the end was the promotion of that spontaneity by which alone society lives, of which the source is in the individual.

Thus the Athenian ideal for a political society is autonomy so far as its external contacts are concerned, and individual liberty at least for a few, within an administrative system which is regarded not as a mechanism but as a living organism.

CHAPTER VII

THE EPIC TRADITION

HAVING reviewed Greek social life and the ideals implied in it so far as concerns religious and political practice, we must now turn to the more conscious idealism of literature and philosophy.

By universal acknowledgment of all Greeks their ideals were expressed and influenced by "the poets"; and chiefly by Homer and Hesiod. We can hardly imagine a Greek conception of life and character which has not been already coloured by literature. It is true that life and therefore a moral atmosphere came first and literature afterwards. The moral standards of a vanished age are undoubtedly embodied in Homer and Hesiod; for the poets did not create the moral atmosphere which is felt in reading the works called by those names, even though they may have profoundly influenced what men admired in the very effort to express it. But of that earlier age, when literature as yet had not become "canonical," we shall not speak here. When Greece was first the Greece of Athenian ceremonies and temples and drama, the canonical poets were already an accepted influence, as much a revelation from outside the common experience of men as are all traditional books. The Greeks, however, escaped the evil influence of "sacred" books as they avoided the danger of a priestly caste or

an established church; their tradition was never allowed to be secure from criticism.[1] And yet Homer and Hesiod spoke for a world outside that of fifth century Athens and with the authority of "our ancestors."

We shall speak, therefore, of the Epic tradition as an already established fact, and we shall discuss it only from the point of view of the fifth and fourth centuries in Athens. For this purpose, with all due apologies to scholars, we may class together, as expressions of the same tradition, Homer and Hesiod; and we shall speak of them as individuals, in the manner of those who read them at Athens and derived from them illumination or encouragement.

There is no doubt of the importance of Homer to the Greek ideals. His influence is acknowledged both by those who approved of it and by those who opposed it. In Xenophon's *Symposium* Nikeratus says that his father wishing to make him a virtuous man, made him learn the whole of Homer. "And so it happens," he says, "that I can repeat by heart the Iliad and the Odyssey." The objection is naturally urged that every rhapsodist can do the same and yet they are not virtuous. To this the simple-minded Xenophon makes his Socrates reply, "That is only because they do not understand the sense of what they recite." Homer rightly understood, therefore, is moral teaching.[2] So also in the fragments of Aristophanes' *Banqueters* the bad

[1] It is false to say that Homer was "the Greek Bible"; for that implies a misunderstanding of the Greek attitude. No one was compelled to "believe in" Homer in spite of his immense influence. *cf.* Livingstone, *Greek Genius*, p. 54. Farnell. *Higher Aspects of Greek Religion*.

[2] Symp. III., 5.

young man is discovered to be bad because he is ignorant of Homer.[1]

On the other hand the attack upon the influence of Homer in the *Republic* of Plato is well known.[2] Probably Plato exaggerated the influence of the example of Homeric gods upon the lives of his contemporaries, as modern magistrates exaggerate the influence on boys of stories of adventure or crime. The majority learn neither their vices nor their virtues from literature. But the moral atmosphere in an accepted and approved author does affect the general tone of society; and in that sense Plato was right. In much later days when Homer had survived all criticism of his morals, an attempt was made to moralise him, on the assumption that he wrote with an allegorical meaning.[3] Both parties, however, those who accept and those who criticise Homer, acknowledge his immense importance to Greek ideals of life and character.

Almost as much may be said of Hesiod. There is a line, said to be by Pindar, which runs :—" Hail, Hesiod! who holdest the measure of wisdom for men." Aeschines uses him as a guide to politics. Aphorisms from him are scattered throughout the conversations recorded by Plato and Xenophon. And as with Homer so with Hesiod, the very antiquity of the sentiments expressed tended to make men suppose that they were correct.

We may attempt then to state what the ordinary

[1] Frag. 222, 223.

[2] *Republic* 377 *sq.* It is indicative of the " canonical " books that other poets are united with Homer in these lines. This carries on the old quarrel of philosophy with the poets which Xenophanes is said to have begun.

[3] *cf.* Stewart, *Myths of Plato*, for a treatment of Allegory, p. 230 *sq.*

Greek found in Homer and Hesiod; and first of Homer. Gods and heroes are the models of character, and conceptions of worthy life are dependent upon the actions of these. As for the gods, we must put aside modern explanation of the brutalities and immoralities of the divine beings in the Iliad. Obviously many apparently immoral actions were simply explanations of primitive ritual; but it must be allowed that what troubles us now probably made very little impression upon Greeks who had been brought up on Homer. It is extraordinary how little critical thought is excited by a book to which every one is accustomed. And in any case no one in Greece was induced to eat his children because a god had done it. There is always a large allowance, even in early times, for what our grandfathers could do and we can not; and a still larger licence is given to deities.

Not by their peculiar habits but by their passions and general attitude the gods of Homer influenced fifth century Greece. Enough has been said against them. Let us therefore see if, from the point of view of an age as yet experimenting in a new morality, anything can be said in favour of the gods. The first feature of the Olympians which should impress us reinforces our argument as to the ideal of Greece being social. Even the gods live in company. It may be that the society is crude and the common feeling of its members even less binding than that of the aristocratic feudal class, whose splendour first made Olympus. But it is a society; and as such we should contrast it with conceptions of the divine which, while as personal as Greek Olympianism, imply an isolation and aloofness in divinity. Such a conception, however high the moral standard

it may give to *the* god, robs him of that highest morality which depends upon converse with equals. In Homer on the contrary, even in the sky the life is social. The gods banquet joyously together: [1] they are all interested in Aphrodite's wound: [2] and a thousand other examples could be cited to show the influence Homer must have had in making "the good life" seem to be in the main "good company."

Secondly, in Homer and in all Greek thought there is no devil: there is no one source of the evil we suffer or the evil which is in us: and such evil as there is, moral or physical, is found to have the same source as the good. We need not quote at length to show how evil is to be found in the character of the gods in such a way that every Greek must have known it to be evil. Zeus sends a deceitful dream to Agammemnon: [3] Athena uses a vile trick against Hector: [4] Hera plays the wanton with Zeus.[5] There is weakness too, for Aphrodite is wounded by a mortal and runs off to her mother.[6] The evil which might have gone to the make of a devil is divided and apportioned to all superhuman beings. And we may understand the Greek moral ideal as affected by such a conception, if we contrast with it the belief which distinguishes absolutely the sources and embodiment of good and evil. The most consistent and powerful form of this belief is Manicheanism; and an element of Manichean dualism remains in orthodox Christianity. It is perhaps to be found even in the New Testament; but it was given the emphasis which it still has by the

[1] Iliad I. in fine.
[2] id. V., 415 *sq.*
[3] id. II. init.
[4] id. XXII., 225 *sq.*
[5] id. XIV., 160 *sq.*
[6] id. V., 340.

never wholly converted Manichean, St. Augustine. The same hard distinction between good and evil is to be found in earlier Persian creeds, in Gnostic theories and in the heresy of the Cathari during the Middle Ages.

All such beliefs involve practical consequences of great importance. They generally lead to condemnation of matter and the body; for what is material or sensuous is given over as entirely evil. The body is treated as despicable: it is either scourged and destroyed or it is indulged. For, strangely, the same beliefs lead to the opposite extremes of action; and some who despise matter argue that we should restrain impulses and convert the joys of the body into sorrow; but others, quite logically, say that the best way to destroy the body is to indulge all appetite excessively, or they say that what happens to the vile body makes no difference to the pure soul. The conception of the devil removes the ultimate issue out of the obvious matter of the world we know, but it represents the same concrete division of good and evil; and it has had, in Calvinism for example, almost the same practical effects in casting a slur upon everything sensuous and beautiful.

The Olympians may be in many ways deficient and their character may have obscured too much the fact that nothing evil is worthy of reverence; but with them the human body ascended into heaven in all its grace and beauty. No one brought up upon Homer could ever fall into the evil heresy that there is anything wrong with "matter." Indeed it is remarkable that Plato, the opponent of Homer, makes precisely the mistake in condemning the sensuous from which a more sympathetic under-

standing of Homer might have protected him. His Greek love of beauty saved him from abnormalities; but he was too adverse to the Homeric sanity. And now once again in our own day the Olympians are attacked as less religious than earlier and less bodily gods. The controversy will never be decided. For there will always be some who prefer the serpents and mist of early magic and late mysticism to the shining faces of the gods and the sunlight of Homer. These gods are indeed material, but none the worse for that; and they share among them the attributes of the devil, but are not necessarily therefore more dangerous to the moral life than the theories which divide absolutely the sources of good and evil.

After all, however, not the gods but the heroes gave to the ordinary Greek his conception of ideal character. Nikeratus, in Xenophon, says that because he knows Homer "whoever desires to be like Achilles or Ajax, Nestor or Odysseus" should come to him.[1] We may turn then from Olympus to the plains of Troy. To our eyes there are great moral deficiencies in the heroes. But men have an infinite capacity for not seeing the obvious, and it is quite possible to admire a certain person for qualities which he possesses, without being even aware of his great lack of other qualities. The average Frenchman does not notice the blood-thirsty vainglory of Napoleon; and the average Englishman is blind to the barbarisms of Drake. Not only do group-beliefs whitewash "heroes"; but excellent qualities are admired under the name Napoleon or Drake, without any consciousness of the deficiencies of the actual characters. So, one

[1] *Symposium* IV. 6.

imagines, the average Athenian thought of Achilles and Odysseus without any consciousness of the blood-lust of the one or the dishonesty of the other. And it would be unfair to condemn the Greeks for admiring such heroes, as though our heroes were spotless or even our saints perfect. If, however, we give to others the credit we claim for ourselves, we shall see that what was called Achilles was friendship, bravery and prowess embodied, and what was called Odysseus was skill in facing intricate difficulties.

From this point of view Greek ideals are magnificently expressed and immensely influenced by the heroes. First, the Iliad and the Odyssey give one a sense of the greatness of man which can hardly be paralleled in the traditional literature of any other race. In the Iliad the gods are everywhere: but they look on, for most of the time, while men do the great deeds: these deeds are the Iliad. Sorrow and inevitable death come upon the greatest; and in the endurance of these man is shown supremely. Achilles bethinks him of his dead and weeps.[1] He knows he is to die in the fray and grandly faces what no gods can.[2] Here indeed are mighty men whom not even the combined terrors of the world and the gods could daunt. Joy in their strength gives colour to their deeds: [3] and they know themselves to be great even when they fail and die. Over them all is a shining glory so great that it has misled more than one after-generation searching for an ideal.

[1] Iliad XXIV., 508.

[2] Id. XVIII. 97. This is what Socrates quotes to persuade his judges that death cannot daunt a man. Apol. 28. *cf.* Ajax' prayer in Iliad XVII., 647.

[3] *cf.* the games in Iliad XXII.

Among Greek ideals, as among those of many other races, is the ideal of courage and manliness in war leading on to glory. The conception of glory it is impossible to express shortly; but its importance for us here is that it was the origin of the unfortunate mistake that courage and manliness are to be found chiefly in the deeds to be done in war. That the great book of their boyhood was a book of war made so much difference to the Greeks that perhaps it is one reason for the continual bickerings of their political history. The criticism which Plato directed against the primitive standards of moral excellence in Homer are really criticisms of an ideal from which Plato himself never wholly escaped; and the ideal is that of warriors. For the Greeks often went to war, not because it was inevitable or forced upon them, but because they liked it; and they liked it because about it was woven the tissue of golden lies which is called glory. But the Epic tradition contained some corrections of the sentimentalism with which such primitive minds as Xenophon and Alexander the Great regarded warfare; for, magnificent over the fields of glory, come the Homeric lines. "Even as are the generation of leaves such are those likewise of men; the leaves that be the wind scattereth on the earth, and the forest buddeth and putteth forth more again, when the season of spring is at hand; so of the generations of men one putteth forth and another ceaseth."[1] And by such thought we are saved from the futility and bestiality of which Greek history is so full.

The judgment of scholars has perhaps been not quite fair to the influence of the Odyssey. There

[1] Iliad VI., 146. *cf.* XVI. init., XXIV. 507 *sq.*

is no doubt that it is less virile, more smooth and finished, than the *Iliad;* but its literary qualities do not concern us here. It had an immense influence on the Greek mind. As it was the *Iliad* which formed " the men of Marathon," and at the close of Greek history armed Alexander against the East, so it was the *Odyssey* which planted Greek colonies adventurously in the far West. We have forgotten that the Greeks were daring sailors and restless explorers. We do not sufficiently notice the ships even in the *Iliad;* but we certainly undervalue the sea-yarns of the *Odyssey*. The Greeks were made by them into colonists, and even in later days the Greek was the adventurer *par excellence* to the staid and slowly moving Roman. But the moral quality which is implied in an admiration for the wild is not sufficiently allowed for in the Greeks. The desire for the open spaces of the world caused the English admiration for buccaneers who, but for their adventures, are sordid and un-ideal. And Odysseus influenced Greek conceptions of character in the same way: since, because of his adventures, the average Greek would probably not consider his propensity to lying. But it is less in its hero than in its atmosphere that the *Odyssey* is great. The atmosphere of the *Odyssey* is clear and the air is free ; for through it all come the sounds and the scent of open sea. No statement of Greek ideals can omit reference to this. For Hellas itself was the sea and its shores ; and the sea was not a barrier but a bond. It was also a defence, but in every aspect it gave Hellas its character and influenced the ideals of life there developed.

The shipwreck of Odysseus is altogether a triumph of sea verse ; the shrouding clouds, the jostling wind,

the rush of the mighty wave sweeping the raft along as the thistle down on the plain, the sea-gull on the wing, and then—the calm and the sight of land, where the swell crashes on reefs—all is immortal.[1] But apart from finished scenes, the *Odyssey* all through smells of the sea. And from the *Odyssey* comes the Greek literary tradition of the sea, of which it will not be inappropriate to speak here. Thucydides is probably right in making the history of the Greeks begin on the sea. Aeschylus wrote of a sea battle in his *Persians*, and he has expressed an Athenian affection for the sea in the appeal of Prometheus to "the countless laughter of the ocean waves." Sophocles counts as one of the chief glories of man his sailing under the crest of waves. And what the sea was for Greeks is recorded unforgettably in that passage of the *Anabasis* which tells of the first sight of the sea after the long march. Finally, at the close of the great period of Athenian literature we find that epigram of Plato's concerning those who were carried away as prisoners by Darius into the regions of Persia far removed from the sea.[2]

These are but a few of the instances of sea literature in the Greek tradition which begins with the *Odyssey*; and they indicate that element in the Greek ideal which we should call the love of adventure. The hero of adventure is, therefore, by no means unknown to the Greeks, and they have quite as genuine an admiration for him as any race could have.

[1] Odyssey V., 290 *sq.*

[2] "Here we lie who left long ago the sounding waves of the Aegean, now in the midmost plain of Ecbatana. Greeting, O fatherland, renowed Eretria; greeting, O Athens, neighbour to our Eubœa; and greeting, beloved Sea!"

Of Hesiod we must speak shortly. The works called by that name were used popularly for a sort of theological instruction as to the history of gods. But theology weighed lightly upon the Greek mind; and indeed it is unfair to call their stories "theology," because no one argued about them. In any case their moral influence would be small, since Hesiod was more valued for his practical precepts. Thus Aristophanes makes him an instructor in "the tillage of land, the seasons of fruits and ploughing."[1] He bears the message of hard toil and the grinding work of men upon the meagre resources of Hellas. There is a sternness about his view of life; and he loves no glory of kings and warriors, for he knows the bitter reality, the injustice to poor men and the narrow selfishness of the upper classes which lies under the golden tissue of glory. It was good for the Greek youth to hear that. But apart from this general view of life, Hesiod is moral teaching of the copybook type. He inculcates prudence and he is full of the dangers of this dreadful life. He causes in one sometimes deep melancholy and sometimes, without intending it, uncontrollable laughter. Perhaps the Greeks too felt at times that things were not so bad after all, when they remembered Hesiod. He is thus a moral influence, but slight as compared with Homer and, being a less skilful poet, he does not master the changing moods of those who read him; for, sometimes he seems a wise old man and sometimes a dismal old fool. That is the fate of all writers of gnomic poetry and copybook morality; but he is the best of the tribe.

When we pass from ideals of character to concep-

[1] Frogs, 1032.

tions of social life, it is almost astonishing to find that lessons of patriotism and service of the *polis* were "drawn from" Homer: but there is nothing that men cannot derive from a text which they have learnt as children. The Homeric heroes have no conception of loyalty except to a warlike band or to personal friends, and although they have a vague feeling of community in so far as all are at war with Troy, there is hardly a hint of civic organisation or devotion to the varied and changeful life of the *polis*, except in occasional precepts and in the attitude of Hector. Hesiod also knows of no *polis*.[1] The city for him is a nuisance. His ideal is a company of good neighbours in a secluded agricultural village; for city men were to his mind, as the old school in Athens tried to believe, very subtle and dishonest.

But this was no obstacle to the wildest appeals to the authority of Homer and Hesiod; and in the use of both there is the same absence of historical sense which is to be observed in the use of other famous books. The scholars of the Middle Ages used to define the position of a mediæval king by reference to the biblical accounts of David and Solomon and their successors. So the Athenians looked to Homer and Hesiod for guidance, in respect to facts on which neither had any real bearing. Nothing is more indicative of the Athenian attitude than this of Aeschines, when he is attacking Demosthenes. "The poet Hesiod," he says, "well interprets such a case. There is a passage, meant to educate democracies (!) and to counsel cities generally, in which he warns us not to accept dishonest leaders. I will recite the lines myself—the reason, I think, for

[1] Zimmern, Greek Commonwealth, p. 89, *sq.* The Muses of Hesiod "have never heard of the City State."

our learning the maxims of the poets in boyhood is that we may use them as men.

> 'Oft hath the bad man been the city's bane,
> And scourged his sinless brethren for his sin;
> Oft hath the all-seeing Father vexed their towns
> With dearth and death, and brought the people low,
> Slain their strong host, cast down the fencéd wall,
> Broken their ships upon the stormy sea.'

Strip these lines of their poetical garb, look at them closely and I think you will say that these are no mere verses of Hesiod's; they are a prophesy of Demosthenes' administration, for by that administration's agency, our ships, our armies, our cities, have been swept from the world." [1] What is interesting here is not the application of a platitude to a particular situation—that is a common device of orators—but the thorough acquaintance with Hesiod which is implied and the general acceptance of him as an authority on political issues. We have, then, in the consideration of Greek ideals to allow for the immense influence of Homer and Hesiod, read as uncritically by some of the Greeks as any Bible has ever been. We have to allow both for the influence of these books and for the freedom from their influence which a completely uncritical reading sometimes gives. And we have also to admit that even the average Greek of the fifth century cannot have been altogether untouched by the adverse criticism passed upon the Epic tradition by contemporary or ancient philosophers. Hesiod escaped the great condemnation because of his less effective influence; and Homer has been unmercifully handled by every moralist. We do not defend him. He needs no defence: for there remains an

[1] Aeschines de Corona, § 134, Jebb.

abiding glow in the Homeric tradition. The splendid form of the gods, their majesty and their strength, their kindliness and their moments of real feeling for us, things of a day—these are great. And of the heroes, we still find Achilles faithful to friends, fearless of death and softened by memory of his old home. Hector we still pity and love; and although Odysseus is too modern a man of business to be altogether admired by us, yet we have a soft place in our hearts for his wiles. After all he was hard put to it, with angry gods and over-amorous goddesses; and it is indeed worthy of admiration that he should come at last home.

36182

CHAPTER VIII

THE FIFTH CENTURY

If we class together the great writers of the fifth century it is from no desire to obscure the fact of disagreements between Sophocles and Euripides or Herodotus and Thucydides. Sophocles is devout and Euripides critical, but Sophocles could think and Euripides could be reverent. They are both divided from the sentimental Virgil. Thucydides was not kind to Herodotus, but he would have been quite unparliamentary if he had read Livy. In this large sense we can speak of the ideals of the fifth century in Athens, as shown in literature.

Individuality had now appeared, and very different characters were admired, very different kinds of life were valued by different men in Athens. Schools of thought disagreed violently. There was a movement towards entirely new and as yet indefinite standards of value. But there was still some common ideal, as there was a common experience upon which all in Athens could depend. We shall endeavour, then, only to indicate the kind of life generally held best, and the kind of character generally admired. The first social bond, the religious union of the *polis*, with its place in ritual for every member of the group, had now become somewhat obscured. The second social bond, the political administration of the *polis*, with its autonomy and individual liberty

partially realised, had become familiar. And men were seeking for something in life and character, the hints of which are to be found in the magnificent literature and plastic art of Athens. As we may well imagine, it was not something simple or easily stated. It was indeed something never quite realised; for Athens never contrived to achieve the full splendour of which her dawn gave so much promise, before the sudden end of her too shortened day. We, looking back, think of Athenian literature and sculpture as so much achievement. But perhaps we should see both more truly if we thought of them as the records of an attempt to reach an ideal which was never attained. For the best minds, even in the fifth century, looked forward, and it is their desire, their longing for better things, which has inspired the work they have left. In that sense there is an ideal in the literature of the fifth century.

So far as expression goes, the poets and historians stood between the thought of average men and that of the philosophers. They were more critical than the average man and less able to accept what was done without passing any moral judgment upon it. But, on the other hand, they were less systematic than Plato and Aristotle, and did not seek to find either the basis of their criticism of tradition or the ultimate conclusions to which what they accepted would lead them. That is to say, they were in the position with regard to ideals of life and character which is always that of poets and literary historians. The inexactness, however, and inconclusiveness of their ideas are quite forgotten in the brilliance of their intellectual activities, the depth of their sympathies and their unsurpassed insight into the facts of life or the promise of better things. For if

ethical philosophers have an advantage over unphilosophic poets, they have also this disadvantage; they are more removed from the flow of life and less able to express the heights and depths of experience. They are also less able so to affect the ordinary man as to give him vision or enthusiasm. When, therefore, we refer to the great poets and historians we intend to discover from them not merely the insight of genius but the admirations which the average man must have felt for as much as he could understand of their visions.

The most excellent evidence for the fifth century ideals of life in Athens is in the speech of Pericles in Thucydides. But this has been quoted so often and expounded so fully that we shall presume here to refer to it rather by implication than by direct exposition. We shall add to its central thoughts the words of poets and less considered indications of the Athenian ideal.

We may distinguish for our present purpose the social from the purely political ideals, allowing, as we have indicated, that the distinction would not be as clear to a Greek as it is to us. Ceremonies and processions, dinners and philosophical converse, are not in our sense of the word political, although to the Greek they were all integral parts of one life. The social ideals of the fifth century are those of men who live much in public. Everybody who was anybody did, in fact, know everybody else in Athens; and the life desired was one in which this close acquaintance could be developed. This is so obvious in the whole literature that it needs no special quotations to indicate its meaning. The citizen of a modern city-region obviously desires a life of isolation or of company in a small clique of his own,

which would be unendurable to the fifth century Athenian. No one in London knows the inhabitants of his own street; and no one selects his acquaintance from among his immediate neighbours. The contrast, however, need not imply that one ideal is any better than the other. The point is that fifth century Athens, and much more the smaller Greek cities, had what we should call village-scandal and village neighbourliness without the narrowness of interests which is usually found in a village. Villagers and country gentry generally talk of one another because they do not know of any other subject; in Athens they knew one another well enough to gossip, but they were aware of a sufficient number of other interests for conversation.

We have already seen that the ideal social life had in it religious ceremonies and political activities. We need only add for the fifth century that such life must be one among equals. This is, no doubt, implied in Athenian religion and politics, but the full meaning is developed in the fifth century conception of tyranny as something horrible, not only to the subjects but to the tyrant himself. In Sophocles' *Antigone* Creon is the tyrant of popular imagination. He is not necessarily wicked; but he is violent, absolute and, above all, he stands alone, independent of the likes and dislikes of other men. Antigone taunts him with the fact that all men would be against him if they were not afraid;[1] and the Chorus at the end meditates upon the downfall of him who stood alone. The tyrant becomes a type of the unsocial man. So in Herodotus[2] it is urged that he is reckless of all other men, and almost a Homeric Cyclops. And at the end of Athenian

[1] *Antigone* 505. [2] Herodotus III., 80.

civilisation, in the dialogue called the *Hiero*, Xenophon reviews the tyrant's life from this point of view. The chief unhappiness of such a life is the lack of companionship among equals.

Again, the old tradition of friendship continued and developed as an ideal. Achilles and Patroclus were already enshrined; but in the historians we have the development of the legend of Harmodius and Aristogeiton; and in the tragedians we have Orestes and Pylades, and many more. It is easy to see that the ideal was a friendship of equals wth great purposes in common, a friendship altogether human, based upon physical beauty, and yet too active in the world of affairs to become sentimental.

This social life must be one not only of public interests but of public action. In this sense the social ideal may be called political: for in fifth century Athens anyone who did not take a sufficient part in the administration of the *polis* was looked at with suspicion. Neither private business nor abstract or aesthetic interests would be held to excuse an Athenian freeman from active participation in what must sometimes, even to them, have been tiresome details of law or of public finance. But although public activity was admired and cultivated, a quiet life was also allowed to be ideal, if it did not involve isolation. For a man should not be too busy about everything public. Indeed too concentrated an attention given to public affairs or the entry upon them when one was still youthful, was looked at askance. The average Athenian must have held that these matters must be taken seriously without private ends to serve, and that they demanded some maturity of experience. Thus a young man is made by Lysias to say :—" I have

understood, senators, that some people are annoyed with me for this too—that I presumed, though rather young, to speak in the Assembly. It was about my own affairs that I was first compelled to speak in public: after that, however, I do suspect myself of having been more ambitiously inclined than I need have been—partly through thinking of my family, who have never ceased to be statesmen —partly because I saw that you (to tell the truth) respect none but such men: so that, seeing this to be your opinion, who would not be invited to act and speak in behalf of the state?" [1] This gives at once the ideal of public activity and the limits set by popular taste to the manner in which it was exercised. And of all methods of social action, speech or skill in reasoning was popularly regarded as most excellent. So Antiphon is drawn by Thucydides as "a man second to no Athenian of his day in excellence: a proved master of device and of expression." [2] Of course he was suspected, and justly, by the democracy, but they could not withhold admiration.

Certainly of all the arts the Athenians loved, the art of public speaking was valued most highly. The audience would applaud a good antithesis.[3] Plato reports how Lysias would finish off his speeches with the care of a good sculptor.[4] Euripides was valued for the very facility for making speeches which is abhorrent to some moderns: and in later times Quintillian actually suggests Euripides as a model for public speakers.[5] This

[1] Lysias: pro Mantith, par. 20. Jebb's trans. in his *Attic Orators*.

[2] Thucydides VIII. 68. [3] Isocrates, Panath, par. 2.

[4] Phaedrus. *cf.* the stories given by Dionysius of Halicarnassus.

[5] Quint., Instit. Orat. X. 1, quoted in Grote ch. lxvii.

alone explains the delight in Athens at the coming of Sophists and the immense wealth which some of them are said to have acquired by training young men for public speaking.[1] Indeed we should not take it so much for granted as we tend to do that Greek literature contains the speeches in Thucydides and the works of orators from Antiphon to Demosthenes. Nothing but a sincere and enlightened admiration for the power of the spoken word could have produced so much. And that admiration is dependent upon the conception of public speaking as a fine art with exact rules, for which practice and special genius were necessary.

We have, then, in fifth century Athens an ideal of life which implies good-fellowship of neighbours, intense personal affection and common service of the city. In its basis this ideal is more natural and kindly if less exalted than that for example of monasticism: and in the service of the *polis* the Athenians found all that variety of experience which we have already seen to be embodied in their religion, along with literature, the dance, music, sculpture and architecture, which already began to be recognised in their own right and not as mere servitors of religion.

It goes without saying that this ideal was limited, and even in its limitations never realised. But criticism we need not give in great detail since any modern reader with imagination can see the limitations of Athens. No one now believes that there was ever such a little town as Keats saw on the vase,

[1] It has been noticed that Xenophon's army in the *Anabasis* is more like a peripatetic parliament than a body of soldiers. And, as a different example of the Greek love of speeches, Gorgias is made by Plato to say that he went round with the doctor to argue with the patient!

And in fact certain deficiencies in the ideal are common to Athens and to many modern cities. Society was conceived only in terms of one sex and of a small social caste: even friendship was not idealised except for those few male slave-owners. The Athenians, except for a few Sophists and Euripides, were blind to the most obvious social evils. Their very *polis*, exalted by being idealised as an object for service, was degraded by becoming an end in itself: and, again with a few exceptions, the Athenians were ignorant of the excellence of other cities and blindly satisfied with any Athens that looked well and was materially successful.

We may now turn to the more personal conceptions of the ideal during the fifth century. And in this we shall consider not anything more definite than the general tendency of Athenian thought in so far as it pointed to improvement. What sort of character was admired? Or, rather, what governing moral ideas moved the Athenian in his everyday life? Or again, what did he most desire to become, in so far as he desired anything definite?

First, a full bodily development was felt to be admirable. The delight in gracefulness and bodily vigour was not an empty sentiment in Athens; for all citizens felt moved to make themselves physically fit and agile. Such vigour was essential perhaps to the military needs of the period; but the Athenians went much beyond the mere exercise for possible campaigns. They valued gymnastics chiefly for grace. And this must be distinguished from the Roman sentiment "Mens sana in corpore sano"; for the Athenian would never have used a word corresponding to "sanus." Health, indeed, is

not a conscious purpose for action except in a decadent age; and the Athenian would have looked with smiling astonishment at so meagre an ideal. Bodily beauty, to be found in proportion of parts, suppleness and vigour,—that is the beginning of the fifth century ideal for the individual. And this beginning is fundamentally moral, according to the Athenian conception. The philosophers were to explain body and spirit; but even the average Athenian knew the body to be altogether excellent and all its activities to be fundamentally good and in no wise vile.

The evidence is in the vase-paintings as much as in the literature; and vase-paintings are much more typical of Greek feeling than is the public sculpture. The fair forms and the frequent inscription "beautiful" show us a feeling which is almost unknown to-day, and is somewhat more unconscious than is usually implied by imitators of the Greek. On the vases are the supple, moving bodies, in the dance, in the gathering of friends, in gymnastics or at the hunt. And such pictures of his ideals the Greek found in every house and street. The very popularity of such vases as we now possess of the fifth century shows much more than the formal sculpture how genuine and how universal was the Greek admiration for beauty, and of all beauty for that of the human body. Sophocles was chosen when he was sixteen for his personal beauty to lead the choir of victory after Salamis. Alcibiades was quite frankly forgiven much because of his fair form. And from the human body and its record upon the vases we may go to the forms of the vases themselves and to many other quite unofficial indications that the basis of all Greek moral ideals

of character was this saturation with what is beautiful. We are so far removed from the naturalness of this conception that to us it seems an aesthetic convention: and we can hardly give its true value to the saying of Hypereides that "one cannot live beautifully unless one knows the beautiful things which there are in life."

Secondly, the man most admired was to be intelligent, but not an intellectualist. "The Greeks," says Herodotus, "have from of old been distinguished from the barbarians as being more acute and free from all foolish simplicity, and the Athenians are esteemed the wisest of the Greeks." [1] And if any one characteristic may be selected as being most typical of the fifth century Athenian ideal it is this,—a man must be quick and ready in wit. The evidence for this is to be found in the intellectual quality of all fifth century literature. There is an intellectual atmosphere about Greek tragedy and particularly about the chief characters in it which is hardly to be found in the Shakesperian tragedy. It is not that Ajax talks better philosophy than Hamlet: nor that the view of the world in *Macbeth* is less exalted than in the *Hippolytus*. The point is that a quicker wit is necessary for following the verbal interchange in Sophocles and Euripides. There is more contact between characters who are intellectual equals: [2] and the audience must have valued points of dialectic which to us appear to interfere with the dramatic action.

But without admiring a fool and certainly without any prejudices in favour of the "strong, silent man,"

[1] Herodotus I. 60.

[2] *e.g.* Hamlet stands alone. In the play called by his name he has no intellectual equal.

the average Athenian was suspicious of the clever fellow or the professed "intellectual." Quite apart from the prejudices of the old school, the intelligence admired in Athens was by no means that of the specialist, still less that of the man who by his intellectual interests is cut off from his fellows. In this matter Plato and Aristotle do not represent average Greek opinion or even Athenian opinion. They stand for a new age, when new associations were taking the place of the old *polis* in men's affections or in men's minds. But in the fifth century even the man of intellect was believed to be at his best when in contact with the ordinary fool, and even the fool accepted the idea that intelligence was admirable; for society was as yet too simple for distinctions of ability to carry men far apart.

Next, the character admired is that of a man who is free and yet not unrestrained. He must be free, above all, from trivial cares; but this did not mean that he should be careless of the graces or fineness of life. There was a largeness of spirit in the Thucydidean Pericles.[1] But the "don't care" of Hippoclides was absurd; for he "stood on his head on a table and gesticulated with his legs"—which was a freedom too un-Athenian.[2] Dignity, then, gives to the ideal man what we should call an aristocratic air. It must be remembered that, although the Athenian citizen might object to doing manual labour, he had no objection to living by the manual labour of his slaves or the women of his household, for he felt himself to be superior to them; and on this rests the possibility of a slave-system. The system, obviously, exists first and

[1] Thuc. II., 65. κατειῖχεν τὸ πλῆθος ἐλευθέρως.
[2] Herodotus VI., 127.

produces the sense of superiority, and then the system is secured and developed by this very sense.

Finally, there is the conception of reserve or of control, which Aristotle attempted to develop into the doctrine of "the mean." The best man, it was felt, was one who, while active in many interests, kept a due control upon his impulses.[1] He is not the philosophical ascetic of Plato, still less the strong silent man of popular English fiction. For the fifth century Athenians never forgot active public life and bodily grace and intelligence in speech. Their ideal of control in character may, perhaps, be most clearly understood by reference to the contrast which was probably in the Greek mind. To Greeks the quintessence of barbarism was excess. They saw round them the violent ecstasies of oriental religion, the monstrosities of unhellenic art, the self-indulgence of barbarous princes and the excessive docility of peoples. They felt all these as dangers, since already in the fifth century ecstasy-religion and the extreme self-indulgence which results from large incomes had appeared in Athens. Therefore, the ideal dignity of the Greeks is reinforced and made conscious in the admiration for the man who could control his impulses.

To suppose that this ideal implies coldness or apathy or the rigidity of a statue is to misunderstand the whole point. Sophocles, who is the most perfect of all the tragedians in the reserve of his art, is never cold or statuesque; and an Athenian audience could give way to tears at the fate of

[1] The ideal of harmony is developed from this: but as we find it in Plato, it is Orphic and Pythagorean, and therefore somewhat different from the fifth-century "self-control."

Oedipus, as the Athenian army could weep when they thought of what war was. Indeed, even in Greek sculpture there is no lack of feeling, except to the eyes of an observer already jaded by the violent striving of moderns to attain the appearance of originality. Indeed, the element of feeling in Greek self-control makes the English words "temperance" or "sobriety" or "prudence" or "wisdom" unsuitable for rendering the Greek conception of the control of impulses. Such impulses must be supposed to exist: they must not simply be absent. The conception may be supposed to be symbolised by Greek statuary, as the conception of the naturalness of the love of beauty may be supposed to be symbolised in the vase-paintings. But even in the Greek ideal control of self, the emphasis is not upon mere inaction but upon the action for which all discipline exists. And action is dependent upon the survival, in control, of impulses or feelings. Indeed it was, in part, because the Greeks had violent feelings that they made an ideal of reserve and control. People not given to violent fits of joy or grief do not trouble to urge themselves to be moderate; although they may indeed suppose their own absence of any emotion to be a virtuous moderation. But when the best voices of a great race urge men to moderation we may be almost certain that the race is not eminently statuesque. And indeed if we look closely into the fifth century we perceive that it is a tangle of intellectual and emotional currents. The Greeks, and especially the Athenians, were easily excited, and they could be moved to extremes of action. For that very reason their ideal man was one who kept his head and, in whatever height of fortune, retained his hold upon his ambi-

tions, in whatever depth of despair remembered his his manhood.

A word of criticism is necessary, because of the limitations of this ideal of character. What was in it was excellent and effective, in so far as Athenians did really acknowledge the place of beauty in its own right, the necessity for intelligence in good-fellowship and the due attention to restraint. The Athenian ideal of character compares favourably in this sense with other apparently more exalted ideals; it was a power in the improvement of ordinary men, for it was based upon a correct perception of facts. By contrast, the lofty ideals of the Middle Ages were given lip-service, but were singularly ineffective; and that largely because they often implied a fantastic misrepresentation of human nature. An ideal of character must be estimated chiefly by reference to its effectiveness in producing the finest quality of men.

The Athenian ideal, however, was limited in many ways. In the reference to intelligence it seems to have implied attention rather to manner than to matter. Skill was more admired than wide knowledge—the power of persuasion more than the ability to prove. It is, indeed, difficult to judge the Athenian atmosphere very exactly; but the later prejudices against physical science seem to depend upon the limitations of the fifth century view of intelligence. The general attitude was not unlike that of those who in our own day admire a culture which is quite innocent of exact acquaintance with physical or historical facts. Again, there was a grievous limitation in the restriction of the ideal of character to a small number of the male sex. A few among the Sophists, and Euripides among the tragedians

perceived that women had souls; but the average Athenian, and still more the average Greek, ignored the subject or was contemptuously indifferent to it. So also the average Athenian complacently supposed that the ideal could not be attained by a slave; or, to put it in another way, he so conceived his ideal that in fact it was unattainable by slaves. Such were the limitations of the Athenian ideal in the fifth century.

It has been well said, however, that the Athenians were not peculiar in their slave-holding and in their subjection of women. Indeed, they are characterised rather by their attempt to correct these evil traditions. And even though the ideals of the fifth century had serious limitations, their positive excellencies are so great that we cannot afford to neglect them. Some of what the fifth century conceived as admirable we have preserved, if not in fact at least in our desires. We still vaguely admire beauty and intelligence and self-control. But some of it has been forgotten or submerged in the confusion of ideals which has followed during the two thousand years of Christianity; and we are only now beginning to free ourselves both from the disdain of these ancient pagans and from the equally futile attempt to excuse barbaric self-indulgence as Athenian.

CHAPTER IX

THE OLD SCHOOL

THE half-conscious moral ideals embodied in and developed by Athenian religion combined with the newer feeling of the literary age and resulted in bringing to prominence certain conceptions and practices which would otherwise have been less noticed because more uncritically accepted. Such conceptions and practices we shall call those of the old school. They imply in the first place a positive moral attitude, and secondly a defensive propaganda against new-fangled notions. The two are parts of the same moral ideal. But for our purpose here we shall distinguish the positive standards maintained from the objections against new ideals. Our first task, then, must be to state and to estimate the traditional moral attitude in its non-controversial form.

Every moral tradition seems to create among some of those whom it influences an admiration for the good old times. They contrast the many evils of their own experience with a time, long ago, when all men were happy and contented. That was the life which we must bring back again. That is the ideal. So Isocrates writes that in the old days "the city was not distracted with law suits and grievances and taxes and penury and wars; people lived on good terms with their neighbours and peace-

ably with all men. Athenians . . . lived in such security that the houses and establishments in the country were handsomer and richer than those within the wall,—many citizens never coming to town even for the festivals, but preferring their own snug homes to a share in the bounty of the state. The public spectacles, for which they might have come, were managed sensibly and not with an insolent profusion. People did not measure happiness by shows, or by rivalries in the equipment of a chorus, or by the like forms of pretentiousness, but by soberness of life, by everyday comfort, by the absence of destitution among citizens."[1]

This is the belief of the old school of every age—there once was a "good" time; and it matters not at all in the study of moral ideals that no such time can be shown to have existed. The men of the fourth century say that it was in the fifth; those of the fifth say it was in the sixth: and so on infinitely. The same ideal was at work when William Morris looked to the thirteenth century, forgetting that Dante looked to a still earlier period; and both forgot that the men of that earlier period said the same—"Not now, indeed, but before us men were happy." So simpler men incline to say that their grandfathers were fine fellows but "the old college is going to the dogs," or "the House of Commons is not what it was once," for reverence and faith and manliness once ruled the world. The old school lives upon an ignorance of history; it is genuinely moved by a simple moral ideal of life and character which its own imagination has created. And when evil becomes obvious, it is the new-fangled notions that are to blame. "Trying new dodges" has brought

[1] Isocrates, *Areop.* par. 51 *sq.* Jebb's trans.

Athens down in the world,—as Aristophanes, in 393 B.C., makes his protagonist say :—

" And would it not have saved the Athenian state
If she kept to what was good and did not try
Always some new plan ? "[1]

As for the moral standard, the old school knows that these things were to be found in the good old days—the country life, frugal simplicity, the manly man and the womanly woman.

There is, first, the admiration for the country life. The literature of Athens is city literature ; but Athens was more like a small agricultural town than like a modern city-region. The air of the country blew into its streets everywhere ; and an ideal of life could not fail to reflect this nearness to hills and fields. " Even in the winter season," says Aristophanes, " you can buy crowns of violets in Athens."[2] And men were not Greek, still less Athenian, who could forget the water-springs and the violets and the olives and the figs. In such an air life would be indeed ideal, but not, to the minds of the old school, in the confusion and noise of city streets. They therefore dreamed of the country life as the only happy one. This—not liberty nor the drama nor anything else, made life worth living. But this ideal is that of an old school because, in the period of Athenian greatness, the agricultural and pastoral life had already faded somewhat into the background. Athens had become a shipping, trading and manufacturing centre. And yet the foundation of Athenian, as of all Greek city life, had been laid in the close dependence of the city upon the agricultural region in which it was built. The city men might despise the country folk, but the old

[1] *Ecclesiazousai* 218. [2] *Seasons.* Quoted by Athenaeus, IX. 14.

school knew the country as the place for more honesty and less talk, for peace and the good fellowship of neighbours. So Demos, who is the old Athens, in Aristophanes' *Knights*, when he reforms the state and purifies morals, sends the young men back to the land to dig and to hunt.[1]

There is no doubt that Socrates' likings are being contrasted with this older feeling when Plato makes him say that he does not go into the country because the company is bad.[2] He liked well enough the plane-tree shade and the running water, but that is the pleasure of a city man. He hated ploughed fields and vacant hours of watching with no one to talk to; but that is precisely what the old school loved. The grievance of the farmer class, when they had to move into Athens because war had devastated their fields, is expressed by Aristophanes.[3] To them the quiet of the country-side must have seemed the old and worthy way of life by contrast with the bustle and crowding of the city; and their feelings would have a counterpart among the older men even in the city. But the old life was gradually disappearing; and what the early fifth century had accepted as the nature of things the end of the century remembered as a past golden age, so that men transformed a fading memory into a moral ideal.

The country life is described with genuine affection by Aristophanes in the *Peace*. "What we yearn for are those fig-cakes and figs and myrtles and violets by the well and olives."[4] And again "There's

[1] Knights 1670. [2] Phaedrus 230 d.

[3] Acharnians 30 *sq.* *cf.* Thucydides II 14: "The change was very painful, for the greater part of the Athenians had been accustomed for generations to live in the country."

[4] Peace, 574 *sq.*

nothing sweeter than when the sowing is over and God sends the rain, to hear our neighbour say—'What'll we do? Let's have a drink, now God is kind. Mother! bring out the beans and barley and figs. . . . Syra, call Manes in from the fields . . . let's have some hare—three plates for us and one for father—call Charinades in for a drink as you pass, for God guards the harvest. When the cicala sings his sweet song, I love to watch the Lemnian grapes and see if they are full—for that kind ripens early. And the fig—I wait till it be soft to pluck and eat. And I bless the kindly seasons,—and I grate and mix the thyme; so I grow fat and fatter, while the summer lasts."[1]

These must stand for many like passages in which there is evidence of the old love of country joys and country scenes. And this love was more genuine in fifth century Athens than in the Alexandria of the days of Theocritus or in the London of the days when pastoral plays were written. For the life of the countryside was known in Athens to be more full-blooded than pastoral poetry implies. There were no china shepherdesses in the minds of the old school: and even the sentimentalism of bucolic poetry had not yet appeared. This ideal life stands, then, not for a revolt against accepted usages so much as for the pull of an actual experience which was passing away. To define it more would perhaps involve reading too much into the minds of the old school. It was the life of the good men of old, and that sufficed. It was the life not only

[1] Peace 1140 *sq.* It is interesting to contrast the agricultural ideal of the country life in Athens with "the forest" as the free and noble life in Mediæval England. *cf.* Shakespeare's "As you like it."

of the simple farmer, but of what we should call the country gentleman; and in that latter form it would naturally be established as the ideal. For there was this social distinction in the Athenian mind: but the old school stood for the country life in all its forms. Indeed the good fellowship of country-lovers makes social distinctions unimportant,—so the old school would like to believe.

With the love of the country has always gone an admiration for simplicity; and for that reason in modern times "the return to nature" has been combined with "the simple life" as a moral ideal. First, what is urban is subtle and all but dishonest; and what is countrified is straightforward. This is, obviously, and always was, pure myth. The countryman is by no means, and never was, guileless. Only the china shepherdess is more innocent than the city girl: for the real shepherdess knows too much to be a seemly decoration for a mantelpiece in a drawing-room. But the myth expresses a moral ideal. The country life in this sense is part of the good old times,—pure fairy-tale; but what does that matter?

Even the city life of Greece, however, and especially that of Athens, retained at least material simplicity. The Athenians were not rich men at the time when their city was greatest. There were, of course, the *noblesse dorée*; and most men, then as now, really admired a show of riches. Alkibiades did not really offend any one but later moralists when he made his great show at Olympia.[1] Indeed Athens felt proud of him. "She loves and she detests and longs to have him," says Dionysus in Aristophanes' *Frogs*.[2] But although the wealthy

[1] Thucydides, VI. 16.2.

[2] Frogs, 1675.

and the reckless may have been admired ; we cannot say that Athens ever adopted the standards of Imperial Rome or of modern cities. An Athenian banquet was noted for frugality; and indeed a show of riches or an excessive amount of eatables was thought to prove that you could not depend upon the guests enjoying the conversation.

The poverty of Athens did not, however, exclude the possibility of being victimised by a collector of funds. A certain Aeschines is thus drawn : " The neighbouring shopkeepers from whom he gets on credit goods for which he never pays, have shut up their shops and gone to law with him. Are not his neighbours so cruelly used by him that they have left their houses and are trying to take others at a distance ? Whenever he has collected club subscriptions, he fails to hand over the payments of the other members and they are wrecked on this little tradesman like chariots at the turning-post of the course. Such a crowd goes at daybreak to his house to demand the sums due to them that passers-by fancy the people have come to attend a funeral." [1]

This half humorous description by Lysias, the literary man who was a friend of Socrates and Plato, gives us a certain insight into the actual simplicity of Athens. And this is easily made into an ideal when incomes become disproportionate. When the old school looked back to the old days, already most of the Athenians, free men as they were, had to exist upon a pittance from the public funds. But the old school always sees the excellence of poverty, especially when it is not their own. Frugal simplicity is the way that other people

[1] Lysias, Frag. I. Jebb, Attic Orators, p. 184 note.

ought to live: and it is to be found most ideally in the country.

Those who set the tone of the old school in their view of the country were what we should call small farmers. They held in Attica the position of a conservative democracy. They were freeholders of small holdings, by contrast with the large landowners who set the tone in Sparta. But even in Attica the ideal man of the country life is aristocratic. The man who is "of kingly disposition," an early riser, a keen agriculturist and a governor of his bailiffs and dependants, is described in the second half of Xenophon's *Economist*. He is perhaps in part an ideal construction; but even as such, he is important as giving us an indication of the best elements in the "manly man." Reading between the lines, we perceive that the manly man is physically developed and slow-witted, with a sublime self-confidence and an honesty of purpose as great as the evil he causes by being unable to see the results of his own actions. He believes that athletics develops character: for by character he means reliability; and he calls a man reliable of whom he can feel certain that he will always do what every one else does who is of the same social class. The καλοκἀγαθός always is a model of "good form." But we must not be unkind. He is a fine fellow, in his simple way.

We have an admirable account of him in Xenophon's tractate on Hunting.[1] We see him going out "in a loose light hunting dress, with foot-gear

[1] The beginning and end of this are not by Xenophon but there is no reason to suspect the central part of the tractate, and in any case the spirit is clearly Xenophon's. *cf.* the discussion in the introduction to Mr. Dakyns' translation, vol. III., part 2.

to match and a stout stick in his hand." Before the hunt begins "he will pray and give promise to Apollo and to Artemis, our Lady of the Chase, to share with them the produce of spoil." [1] Then, when the hunt of the hare is up and the chase grows hot, he wraps his cloak about his left arm, snatches his stick and runs with the hounds, shouting to the keeper, "Mark her, boy, mark her! hey, lad! hey, lad!" Or perhaps the hounds have outrun him and he "cries to a passer-by as he tears along,—'Hallo there, have you seen my hounds?'" They lose the scent or they are off again or, at the close of the chase, they search everywhere for "the hare that lies dead-beat." If it be a summer noon when he stops "he will take care to halt on the way home so that the feet of his hounds may not be blistered on the road." The character of the man stands out in this rapid sketch of a morning's hunt. And sometimes he will go for bigger game. For deer he will go with javelins; or he may set traps in the hills which he will inspect early in the morning; [2] or he will hunt wild boars, but not alone. Sometimes the boar turns on his assailant: then you wait with your boar-spear fixed, "legs wider apart than in wrestling," then lunge so that the boar does not knock the spear out of your hand. If he does, "the huntsman must throw himself upon his face, and clutch tight hold of the brushwood under him, since if the boar should attack him in that posture, owing to the upward curve of its tusks, it cannot get under him." [3] The beast stands and tramples on him. Then a fellow huntsman provokes the boar "making as though he would let fly at him;

[1] Xen. Hunting, VI. 11 *sq.* [2] id. IX. 17.
[3] id. X. 13 sq.

but let fly he must not, for fear of hitting the man under him. The boar, seeing this, will leave the fallen man, and in rage and fury turn to grapple with his assailant. The other shall seize the instant to spring to his feet and not forget to clutch his boar-spear as he rises." Here is fresh air and keen life and bravery and all that makes what Xenophon and, one supposes, the old school with him, most admired.

But conclusions are drawn in the same tractate as to character and life.[1] From hunting one has "health and quickening of eye and ear, and defiance of old age." Such toil gives true nobility.[2] A contrast comes to one's mind. In the perhaps too satiric essay on "Exercise" in the *Spectator*,[3] health and character are urged as reasons for hunting. But the Greek feeling is very different from the English. To the Greek health is quickness of eye and ear and the outward suppleness of the body. It is τὸ καλόν. For the body is a thing of outward and visible splendour. To the English squire health means digestion. "I consider the body," says the *Spectator*, "as a system of tubes and glands, or, to use a more rustic phrase, a bundle of pipes and strainers fitted to one another after so wonderful a manner as to make a proper engine for the soul to work with." What could any soul do with such an instrument except digest roast beef? "This description," the *Spectator* continues, "does not only comprehend the bowels, bones, tendons, veins, nerves and arteries, but every muscle and every ligature, which is a

[1] ch. xii. I neglect ch. xiii. as bad-tempered and less valuable; even if it is by Xenophon, it is in his cantankerous mood.

[2] "These are 'the best.'"

[3] Exercise: Sir Roger as Sportsman.

composition of fibre, that are so many imperceptible tubes or pipes interwoven on all sides with invisible glands or strainers." There must therefore be exercise "to mix, digest, and separate the juices," which will keep the understanding clear, and keep off "spleen" in men and "vapours" in women. The whole essay is an illumination. To the modern man—not only to the English squire—the body is all "insides"; to the Greek it was fair form and supple movement. And the contrast is well seen in the prints and drawings of red-faced fox-hunters, if we put them beside Xenophon's huntsmen or the youths on the vase-paintings. From such comparisons one may understand the best that was in the ideal of the old school at Athens.

With this ideal country life of the old school went a genuine affection for animals; and we should not fail to notice it in considering the moral quality of the Greeks. Xenophon says that the hunted hare is so supple that one might well "be lost in astonishment at her beauty." His affection does not prevent his killing her; but that is only the ingenuousness of the old school. And for dogs there is no better feeling in literature than in Xenophon—where he gives us the names of the pack and where he tells us to be careful to give them a rest at noon. But of all animals the Greek knows and loves best the horse. That is expressed in their sculpture and in their legends. And Xenophon as an exponent of the old school is perhaps at his best when he speaks of the horse. It reveals much as to character to hear such keen appreciation for the psychology as we should call it, of the horse, combined with what we seem to value less, an enthusiasm for its grace and strength. The treatise on *Horsemanship*

makes a great point of gentleness in dealing with the horse. For the horse is to learn "not fondness merely, but an absolute craving for human beings." [1] "A good deal can be done by touching and stroking." "The groom must take his charge through crowds . . . and if the colt is disposed to shy he must teach him—not by cruel but by gentle handling—that they are not really formidable." And again "the golden rule in dealing with a horse is never to approach him angrily . . . Thus when a horse is shy of any object and refuses to approach it, you must teach him that there is nothing to be alarmed at, particularly if he is a plucky animal; or failing that, touch the formidable object yourself and then gently lead the horse up to it. The opposite plan of forcing the frightened creature by blows only intensifies its fear, the horse mentally associating the pain he suffers at such moment with the object of suspicion, which he naturally regards as its cause."[2] So in dealing with temper or spirit in a horse, remember "that it takes the place of anger or passion in a man; and just as you may best avoid exciting a man's ill-temper by not using harsh speech and rough action, so you will best avoid enraging a spirited horse by not annoying him." [3] Such an understanding of animals is completed by genuine admiration. A horse with free and joyous action is a splendid sight: "Listen to what lookers-on say—The noble animal! What willingness to work! What paces! . . . A joy at once and a terror to behold!" [4] So in the processions you should have "a high stepper and a showy animal." The gods themselves care for these things. "Mane, forelock,

[1] Horsemanship II., par. 4. Dakyns' trans.
[2] id. VI., par. 13. [3] id. IX., par. 2, *sq.* [4] id. t. par. 17.

and tail are triple gifts bestowed by the gods." [1] And "the horses on which gods and heroes ride, as represented by the artist, have fine airs and graces. The majesty of men themselves is best discovered in the graceful handling of such animals." [2] There speaks the Athenian. "A prancing horse is a thing of beauty, a wonder and a marvel, riveting the gaze of all who see him, young alike and grey-beards. They will never turn their backs or weary of gazing so long as he continues to display his splendid action." Comment is superfluous. We see here the feeling which made the frieze of the Parthenon possible.

The "manly man" is one ideal of character to the old school: the other is the "womanly woman." She is either the mother of fifteen children or so obviously interested in nothing else that one may give her credit for fifteen although they may never have been born. She is created for his own glory by the obtuseness of the manly man out of his own fifth rib. Her excellence is partly due to the fact that she, the model woman, is the conservative of conservatives. Aristophanes is a witness; but unfortunately for our purpose the wit of the comedian puts an alloy of realism into the figure of the womanly woman.

"They roast their barley, sitting, as of old:
They on their heads bear burdens, as of old:
They keep their Thesmophoria, as of old:
They bake their honied cheesecakes, as of old:
They victimise their husbands, as of old:
They still secrete their lovers, as of old:
They buy themselves sly dainties, as of old:
They love their wine unwatered, as of old." [3]

[1] Horsemanship, V., par. 7. [2] id. XI., par. 9.
[3] Ecclesiasousai, 220 *sq.* Roger's trans.

The very mingling of the elements of admiration for old times, and a sly wink at actual facts is in the mood of the old school. For although Aristophanes can hardly be called simple-minded, the oldest of the old school have that strange combination of views about women—they are angels of the home and yet really the work of the devil himself.

Xenophon is a more ingenuous witness; and he has given us the womanly woman from her childhood up. The model wife is so young [1] as to be hardly worth conversing with, and is married after an education in "seeing and hearing as little as possible and asking the fewest questions."[2] She is then "tamed" by her husband,—the metaphor implies the domesticating of a timid wild animal. And the husband says to her, "Don't imagine I married you or your parents gave you to me from any difficulty that either of us might have in finding another bedfellow. Any one might do. But it was because we thus could make the best (business) partners." And as to your duties "God from birth provided the woman's nature for indoor and the man's for outdoor occupation."[2] . . . "Thus for a woman to bide tranquilly at home rather than roam abroad is no dishonour, but for a man to remain indoors, instead of devoting himself to outdoor pursuits, is a thing discreditable."[3] This is so delightful as hardly to need commentary. We have seen the making of the angel; and now we must understand her beatific vision. It is her husband. "The greatest joy of all," says the husband in

[1] Econ. III., 12, VII., 5 (15 years old). Ar. Pol. VII. 1335*a*.
[2] id. VII. 23.
[3] id VII. 30.

Xenophon, "will be to prove yourself my better; to make me your faithful follower; knowing no dread lest as the years advance you should decline in honour to your household, but rather trusting that though your hair turn grey, yet in proportion as you come to be a better helpmate to myself and to the children, a better guardian of our home, so will your honour increase throughout the household as mistress, wife and mother, daily more dearly prized."[1] Then follows a long sermon on order and arrangement which the husband says his wife was delighted to hear, but it all arose out of the fact that he could not find something and his wife did not know where it was. Pots and pans and arrangements for breeding slaves properly are all carefully described.

In spite, however, of this delightful life and the rapt gaze upon her spouse, the devil came in. The lady took to enamelling her skin and using rouge and wearing high-heeled shoes; upon which she received another sermon,[2] her husband suggesting that making the beds would be better for her complexion. The worthy husband then shows how the limb of Satan is converted and delights in nothing more than in making the beds.

It would be unfair, however, to the ingenuous Xenophon if we did not allow also for the fact that he appreciated, as others of the old school often did, the genuine affection of man and woman. It is not always a question of believing in an angel with a practical eye to keeping an effective upper servant; the old school is quite seriously romantic. Xenophon has written in the *Cyropaedeia* the first love story in Greek literature. The woman there is

[1] Econ. VII. 43. [2] id. X.

married and is loved passionately by a romantic soldier who has captured her; but she is strong and fine, and her devotion to her husband is drawn as the affection of an intellectual equal. To this the old school could occasionally rise.

Thus we conclude that the positive ideal of those who looked into the past for a better life and finer characters combines elements of real moral excellence with a moral obtuseness that is hardly to be surpassed in any age. The collection of slightly mean moral platitudes to which they might be driven when they were asked to express themselves, may be found most candidly collected in the letter of Isocrates to Democritos. It was written as late as 374 B.C., but the sentiments are old as the hills. "First," says the writer to the youth, "be religious, both in sacrifice and in keeping your oaths. For that is the way to be lucky in business and to have a good character. Always reverence the divine—*but especially in the way that every one else does.*[1] For thus you will appear both to worship the gods and to keep the laws. Be to your parents what you want your children to be to you. Take exercise not for strength but for health; and stop before you are over-tired. Think it not right to talk of what you would be ashamed to do. Remember that the majority do not know the truth—they look to one's reputation. . . Don't indulge yourself too much. . . . Don't make any one your friend before finding out what sort of man he has been to his former friends. . . . Don't be eager to make friends, but try to stick to it when you are in. . . . Try your friends in misfortune, for gold is tried in a furnace and a friend in adversity. Beware of those who

[1] τιμᾶ τὸ δαιμονιὸν ἀεί, μάλιστα μὲν μετὰ τῆς πόλεως.

have money and don't know how to use it. They are like a man who has a good horse and rides badly. Look after your income; you never can tell what might happen.—Do good to good men, for it is a good treasure to lay up thankfulness in a trustworthy man. . . . Be moderate in drink. . . . Think nothing human safe. . . . Avoid blame rather than danger. . . . Try to live in security, but if danger comes, seek safety in war with dignity, not ill-repute. Fate brings death to all; but nature a good death to the brave."[1] The rendering of Greek ideals would be incomplete without the candour of this miserable prudence masquerading as morality. Some Greeks, and not the most foolish, admired this sort of thing; and the best of the old school cannot escape the charge that this is part of the wisdom of the good old times. "Always reverence the divine—*but especially in the way that the community does.*" This is the criterion of action which has slipped out; and by it the old school must be judged. It combines their genuine idealism with their ludicrous obtuseness in regard to moral questions.

But it is a postulate of the old school that the old times exist no more. They have a grievance. Both as to life and as to character they are pained to know that their standards of excellence are not universally admitted; and they therefore adopt an attitude of protest. Against what do they protest? First, against the supposed "unsettling" effects of reasoning. We have an example of the effect of the "new thought" upon a less vigorous mind than Plato's, but one which was able to appreciate the points made against the conventional view of

[1] Isocrates, Ep. I., in the Teubner text.

morality. It is the *Dissoi Logoi*.[1] And we shall refer to it here simply as an example of what the average Athenian might regard as dangerous. The fragmentary discussion in this work turns on the opposing views of moral problems which, it seems, may equally well be held. It begins abruptly—"There are two views maintained in Greece by philosophers about good and evil." On the one hand the same things may be either, and the point of view makes the only difference. The defeat of the Persians was bad for them and good for Greece. On the other hand it is absurd to suppose that the same fact is referred to when you say you have done good and when you say you have done harm to anyone. The conclusion is that you might on the one hand hold that good and evil were to be found in every act; or on the other that some acts were good and some bad.

The same sort of attitude is adopted towards the distinction between what is decorous and indecorous. Here the arguments are intended to show that you might hold that the distinction was purely conventional or "subjective" or you might hold that the two ideas do refer to objectively distinct facts. But the force of the argument is not what would most annoy the conventional. They would be more pained by the cool reference to distinctions of custom. "The Massagetae cook and eat their parents, and they think it a fine tomb to be buried in their children: but in Greece if any one did this sort of thing he would be driven forth to die as a

[1] Diels. Vorsokr. II. p. 334 *sq.* (Edit. 1912). It fills about a dozen pages of text. It is believed to have been written about 404 B.C.; and perhaps in Megara. *cf.* Taylor *Varia Socratica*, III.

shameless villain." [1] It makes little difference to the old-fashioned that the philosopher can make as good a case against as for the subjectivity of all standards of action or belief. From the purely philosophic point of view the interest to us now, and to those for whom the book was written, must lie in the quality of the arguments used: but in judging the old-fashioned Athenian the secondary interest—the collection of opposed customs and irreconcilable beliefs—must be regarded as most important. For we can well imagine the pained surprise of a true believer who hears his own tradition treated as merely one among many. The old faith depends for its security upon being *the* truth as compared with all possible errors. But when your young men coolly classify you among the rest, you perceive the looseness of their morals and the strangeness of their belief. It is the young who have gone wrong, according to the old school. For in the old days no one argued the case as to whether what our forefathers did was right—but now that argument is in the air every sacred custom has lost its hold, and even we of the old school do not feel so certain of ourselves as we should like.

There is another *Dissoi Logoi*, the quarrel of the Just and the Unjust Reason in Aristophanes' *Clouds*.[2] "The old school for the youth," says Just Reason, "was like this—first, one might not hear a boy's voice whispering, those of the same district walked in order through the streets to the music-master's, without overcoats even in thick snow. Then the master taught them, sitting without crossing their legs, either "Dread Pallas, Sacker of cities," or "Some far-flung note," —fitting the scale their

[1] id. 639 *sq.* [2] 889 *sq.*

fathers left. Any new-fashioned variations would be rewarded with a whipping. . . ." "An obsolete business," Unjust Reason interrupts, "—like the Bouphonia." And the orthodox reply in every age—"These old customs made our national heroes. Now you teach the youth to molly-coddle. . . But if you follow the better older Reason, you will keep clear of the market place and the hot baths; and you will blush when you ought and be indignant if anyone laughs at you. You will give up your seats to older men and not be rude to your parents, and not lose shame. And you won't go to the dancing-girl's and get pelted with quinces by her and lose your reputation. And you won't contradict your father and call him "the old 'un." The result will be that you will be *strong* and healthy and not a babbler with no shoulders and a pasty face."

The Unjust Reason, replies, with a sly hit at "Eristic," by an argument in which he forces the Just Reason to say that tradition itself is against him! For Heracles liked hot baths and good dinners; and "heroes" were not always strictly moral. But as a second argument, if you give up the old-fashioned ideas, "you'll have a fine time of it with girls and wine and laughter, and you'll be able to defend yourself too in a court of law." [1] And "Just Reason" is compelled to admit that he might find some advantages in that. So the comedian twists the charge against "the new life"—it is less strict, but it is real living and not solemn ritual.

What the orthodox Athenian would have said to Aristophanes as a defender of old times is not

[1] 1073.

so easily grasped as commentators imagine. The comedy cuts both ways ; and the general discomfort of the old school would not be eased by hearing abuse of new-fangled notions combined with inconvenient innuendo about the good old days. If one is to decry the new ideas as immoral it must obviously be maintained that there was no loose living in the old days and that no good men practise new customs. But when we put the good old days face to face with the new life, the result is not such as would leave even the traditionalist quite satisfied. His general objection to criticising anything would, however, still survive. When it is pointed out that the men of the good old days were not exactly all they should have been, the old school is reduced to mere annoyance at such insolence. As Aristophanes [1] puts it :—

" Hence moreover
You discover
That to sit with Socrates
In a dream of learned ease
Quibbling, counterquibbling, prating,
Argufying and debating
With the metaphysic sect,
Daily drinking in neglect,
Growing careless, incorrect,
While the practice and the rules
Of the true poetic schools
Are renounced or slighted wholly,
Is a madness and a folly."

The trouble clearly was the " unsettlement." Tradition was not reverenced as it should be. Why ? The old school readily asserted that it was all on account of this new-fangled reasoning and arguing about everything ; but what they meant was

[1] Frogs, 1764.

that the knowledge of foreign customs and non-Athenian beliefs had at last compelled the few who could not help thinking to compare beliefs and customs. We indeed can see, as Socrates saw, that the unsettlement was due not to reasoning but to tradition: for it was not due to reasoning that one tradition contradicted another or that one people held actions right which another held wrong. Our tradition only fails to be unsettling when we are ignorant of any other person's tradition; and in that sense knowledge of another tradition is the source of unsettlement. But the knowledge of another tradition does not disturb unless we can think of our own tradition in exactly the same way as we think of the tradition of others.

The habit of seeing two sides to a question was obviously not a violent break with the Athenian tradition; it may be in a sense the legitimate development of the Athenian love of the law-court. Out of that love the lawyer advocate and special pleader rose to pre-eminence in Athens; and it is the very essence of the advocate that he should be able to make out a case for any person on any ground. That simple men might be worried by this seemingly evil agility of mind is easily understood. So the two Athenians in Aristophanes' *Birds* seek "some easier unlitigious place."[1] But most Athenians delighted in a good argument, and the speech writers made their living—sometimes a very good one—by providing *Dissoi Logoi* of a practical kind. Of these the best examples are the *Tetralogies* of Antiphon.[2] They are models

[1] Birds, 51 *sq.* "Our Athenians sit chirping and discussing all the year, perched upon points of evidence and law."

[2] *cf.* Jebb, Attic Orators I. 45 *sq.*

for plaintiff and defendant in cases of homicide. Short renderings are given of what (1) the accuser may first say, then of what (2) the defendant might reply, then of what (3) the accuser may answer to that, and of what (4) the defendant may further urge. The argument is sometimes subtle, as in the case of the boy killed by accident: the thrower of the javelin which killed him urges that the boy is to blame for he was in the way; to which the accuser replies by saying that he is a plain man and cannot follow this sort of thing.[1] Antiphon, the writer of these model speeches, was indeed one of the "dangerously subtle" party: but he was not a philosopher and certainly was not disliked for his skill. It was when the traditionalist Athenian began to feel that this same method of his law-courts could be used for criticising his tradition that the resentment began to be felt. This is the point concerning the attitude of the old school that is not sufficiently appreciated. They remained Athenian and therefore liked clever general speeches. They had no objection whatever to the teachers of rhetoric, the art of getting on or of political speaking. No historical ground can be given for any Athenian's confusing Gorgias and Protagoras with Socrates; and there was no general feeling against the wandering scholars, the Sophists. There was, perhaps, a feeling that they ought not to make fortunes out of "benefiting humanity," a feeling which was stronger among the later philosophers than among the ordinary public. But in general the *method* of the Sophists was not disliked, since it was based upon the common Greek admiration for public speaking; and the *purpose* of the Sophists was not

[1] Tetral. II.

disliked, since it was simply success in public life and this was to every Greek a very legitimate ambition. It is quite clear that the average Athenian objected to what was peculiar to Socrates and not to what he shared with other Sophists; that is—to a dialectic as opposed to a hortatory method and a purpose which did not seem to give sufficient importance to established political institutions and established moral standards. The Sophist in so far as he was a teacher, even a foreign teacher, of method, was not disliked, and he was not laughed at by Aristophanes. It was the *scientific* man belonging to a half-religious Academy, and not the *literary* man, who was felt to be dangerous. Arguing about what every one had taken for granted was the offence, and, still more, pressing such arguments to a conclusion. For the old school did not object to a clever speech if its conclusion was not a new one; exactly as the orthodox in every age do not object to reason being an "ancilla fidei" or "proving" what they already believe to be true. What they did object to was the implication that they did not already know what was true, especially with respect to morals.

The Athenians seem to have resented the idea of "science" as applied either to nature (ἡ περὶ φύσεως ἱστορία) or to political life. Hence Aristophanes can make points against Socrates in the *Clouds* and against Euripides in the *Frogs*. In the *Clouds* Socrates is drawn as a mathematical or physical scientist; and this is not unlikely to have been true of Socrates in 423 B.C. when the *Clouds* was written.[1] He has adopted the theory

[1] For the whole argument *cf.* Taylor, *Varia Socratica*, 1st Series, ch. 4.

of the Anaxagorean scientists that the earth is a centre of rotatory motion (δίνη)[1] which is cleverly twisted by Aristophanes into a belief in "the heavenly whirligig" (ὁ αἰθέριος δῖνος). This has taken the place of the personal explanation of natural phenomena. Zeus no longer "rains" but the "Clouds" rain; and they are controlled by this force.[2] Beneath the fancy of the comic poet one feels the discomfort of the average Athenian at these "new-fangled" ideas. For although he would not say that the new ideas were false, he would feel that it was not quite "nice" to indulge at all in such ideas.

So also with practical issues, the old school feels uncomfortable when a scientific view is taken of them,—that is, when the thinker says that it is no criterion of right and wrong that certain acts have always been done. They feel that it is making a useless confusion; and therefore Aristophanes makes Euripides say:[3]

> Thus it was that I began
> With a nicer, neater plan,
> Teaching men to look about,
> Both within doors and without,
> To direct their own affairs
> And their house and household wares,
> Marking everything amiss:—
> "Where is that? and what is this?
> This is broken—that is gone."
> 'Tis the modern style and tone.

[1] This is admitted by Plato, *Phaedo* 99*b*.

[2] Clouds, 379, 370. So Aristophanes can play upon the likeness between the name of the new god and the old (id. 826). Δῖνος βασιλεύει, τὸν Δί' ἐξεληλακῶς. The scholiast may be right when he says (id. 1473) that Socrates is made to keep a model sphere in his "Notion-shop" which Strepsiades takes for a statue of Dinos.

[3] Frogs, 1210 *sq.*

And Dionysus replies :—

> Yes, by Jove,—and at their homes
> Nowadavs each master comes,
> Of a sudden bolting in
> With an uproar and a din ;
> Rating all the servants round—
> " If it's lost it must be found.
> Why was all the garlic wasted ?
> There, the honey has been tasted :
> And these olives pilfer'd here.
> Where's the pot we bought last year ?
> What's become of all the fish ? "
> Thus it is—but heretofore
> The moment that they cross'd the door
> They sat down to doze and snore.

Again, the old school might not feel complimented by the poet, but they would say—" You see ! This confusion all comes of arguing about practical affairs. We can understand a man arguing in law ; but where is it going to end if you won't let anything rest ? " Exactly so the maintainers of established custom in every age, when driven from the defence of a cosmological creed against science, make their last stand against reasoning on the ground that it makes men *act* differently from the majority.

The controversial attack upon new-fangled notions joins here with the positive standards of the old school. The ideal is to think and to act μετὰ τῆς πόλεως —exactly as every one else does in your particular city. And if any one is offensive so as to say that customs vary, then you must deal with him as St. Louis' model knight dealt with the Jew who confuted him in an argument—set upon him with a stick !

CHAPTER X

SOCRATES

THE crisis in the conflict of Greek ideals is well marked by the history of Socrates. He, more than any of his contemporaries, understood the true value of the new scientific spirit; but he was never misled into a barren opposition to traditional beliefs and practices. He did more than any man to produce the reasoning which eventually proved the limitation of Greek ideals; but he himself never dealt with the evidence and was never really freed from the burden of inherited custom and contemporary creeds. The very data of his philosophy were the results of religious thought; but, although he was a discoverer of new facts and a keen critic of accepted conventions, he never fully established the fundamental nature of those realities of which philosophy must take account, and he never in his criticism managed to probe deeply enough under the skin of the inherited belief which passes for "experience."

Not unusually Socrates is represented by modern philosophers as though he would agree with the Christian Fathers in their righteous indignation at the practices and beliefs of the wretched pagans, his fellow-countrymen. But it is perhaps no longer necessary to use Socrates as a stick for beating the Athenians, since he more than any other would

have laughed at so childish an occupation. He knew how much he owed to Athens—the record of his debt is written in the *Crito* and in the *Apology*. He could not live out of Athens. It is, however, difficult to recognise the many points of contact that a revolutionary may have with his contemporary opponents, and it is for this reason that morality as it was for Socrates has not been fairly discussed. Some have made him appear to have been much too far in advance of his day: and others, who are really at the same stage in philosophical thought as the average Athenian, have supposed him as inconsistent as a liberal theologian.

Our purpose here must be limited to showing the contact of Socrates with the moral and social ideals as they stood in his day. The larger question of mystical or poetic emotion we shall put aside for the present and confine our attention to the organised and official religion of the Athenian state. Under this heading, as we have said above, the Mysteries must be included: but first it is better to concentrate our attention upon the more obvious and elementary facts of Athenian practice and belief. We shall omit for the present the doctrine of Socrates as to what ought to be done, and consider only his attitude towards what actually was done. His ideals, Athenian as they were in their source, go beyond the accepted standards and we shall speak of them when we deal with the Platonic philosophy of conduct. Here it is only the life of Socrates which is in question. His character is expressed in his criticism of current belief and practice; and his action with respect to religious and moral standards is the result of the criticism he passed.

By way of introduction it is necessary to say a word as to the evidence for the opinions and character of Socrates. In what follows it is accepted as proved that the Socrates who speaks in the dialogues of Plato is the historic Socrates.[1] The views there put into the mouth of Socrates are not Plato's; and, although there is a certain artistic modification of actual arguments and perhaps a deliberate change of words, on the whole Plato was not using a mere dummy behind which to shelter himself. It is Socrates as he spoke in life and not Plato who speaks in the Socrates of the dialogues. The philosophical views of Socrates himself are given there and not the later opinions of Plato. For it is perfectly clear that Plato when he is conscious of presenting non-Socratic views does not make Socrates the speaker. In the *Timaeus* and the *Laws* the views expressed are more likely to be the author's own; and it is only fair to him to suppose that, although a certain amount of himself must have entered into his presentation of his master, he did not deliberately mislead us by creating a fictitious Socrates when he takes pains to make Socrates speak. This view implies that Xenophon's presentation of Socrates is false. There may have been, of course, traditional sayings of Socrates which have been preserved by Xenophon and not by Plato. But Xenophon had a habit of attempting to improve on others by depending upon the work they had done and at the same time contradicting their authority. In all essentials his testimony is worthless, not less as to the religious belief and practice of Socrates than as to his character. He is an example of those

[1] The proofs are in Taylor's *Varia Socratica* and Burnet's edition of the *Phaedo*.

more recent biographers who attempt to substitute for the portrait drawn by an artist a photographic distortion, giving us only bombastic platitudes and negligible gossip. Every sentence reported by Xenophon to have been said by Socrates may have been spoken and yet the result is a complete misrepresentation—as complete as the portrait of a friend taken by an amateur photographer.[1]

The Ethical views of the real Socrates are those expressed, not in the *Memorabilia* but in the *Euthyphro, Gorgias, Meno* and *Republic*. The contrast between religious practice and moral action is not Plato's but is really due to Socrates. There may be implications developed by Plato which would not have been so obvious at the time when Socrates was disputing with the Sophists; but speaking generally the Ethical statements of Plato must be regarded as historically the statements of the real Socrates. And probably the hesitation in formulating and the method of enforcing truths is a genuine report of the Socratic moral teaching, since Plato himself may very well have reached more certainty and more systematic conceptions than his master. Further, there is no ground for supposing that the metaphysics in the dialogues is Plato's any more than is the Ethics. The two are closely connected, especially in the conception of intrinsic good. The theory of Forms (Ideas), said to be held by Socrates, is not Plato's own. The historic Socrates had accepted from others, developed and maintained, the theory of Forms, as he is said by Plato to have done: and the opposite theory—that Plato developed a metaphysic out of the Ethics and crude

[1] The same sort of criticism must be passed upon Aristotle's Socrates. *cf.* Taylor, *Varia Socratica*, ch. II.

hints of a Socrates such as Xenophon describes,—is historically impossible. The historic Socrates seems to have had a perfectly definite, if somewhat limited, metaphysics and to have been influenced by this in his attitude towards religion. The theory of Forms which is popularly known as Platonic was really established before Socrates began to teach; and this is abundantly evident from the way in which it is presented in the *Phaedo*. For it is there supposed to be familiar to the speakers; and nowhere in Plato is it treated as a new discovery. It is referred to as a ground for argument concerning immortality and it had, no doubt, influenced the Socratic view of the divine. But we may put aside for the present the religious element in this metaphysics and deal only with the more obvious expressions of the attitude of Socrates

All this implies a much greater Socrates than historians have generally supposed to exist; and it seems also to dethrone Plato or to make of him a mere Boswell. But, so far as Socrates is concerned the impression he made on his contemporaries and successors could not be explained at all on the older hypothesis. Only if the Platonic Socrates is the historic Socrates can we explain the immense effect of Socrates upon later thinkers, some of whom were by no means Platonic. And, as for Plato, although the new view may seem to make him less original as a thinker, it makes him much more skilful as an artist. This may be disputed, on the ground that it is a finer art to produce by imagination a new character than to present a person who actually existed. But it is a much rarer gift to express the inner and truest spirit of a real man than to write fiction, for the material is more intractable. Nor is

it a case of reproducing obvious features, for in skilful portraiture the details may even seem incorrect to the eye of a photographer. It is not as though, in the Xenophontic manner, Plato had told us the length of Socrates' nose or the number of the hairs on his head; and yet he has given us the body of the man as well as his soul His Socrates is flesh and blood, not an idealised myth created out of profound admiration. So that the evidence of Plato is not by any means like that, for instance, of the Fourth Gospel. There scholars have indeed found an intimate understanding: but there is lacking that bodily form and exactness of place and time which distinguish historical insight. Socrates as he is presented to us by Plato lives in a world we can recognise from other sources, and acts as we are forced, also from other sources, to suppose he did act.

This is not, of course, a defence of Plato. What has been said is intended only to express the nature of the source which we may use for understanding the attitude of the historic Socrates. Obviously even if that source is contaminated, even if the Platonic Socrates is a dramatic rather than an historic figure, his views would be of immense importance; since the expression of such views at the date when the dialogues were first published would of itself be important as evidence of the moral situation. Whoever held such views they must have had an important effect, and that they could be put into the mouth of a man condemned by the Athenian law would make them all the more pointed. But we take it as proved that the views are those of Socrates and we shall attempt to express the point of view of which such views were the result.

Our problem then is to present the general attitude of Socrates towards human life ; for his attitude is typical of the change which came over Greek tradition at the end of the fifth century. If he thought in this way, it is reasonable to suppose that many others were moving in the same direction even though they may never have reached the same conclusions. Not that there was a complete or even partial conversion of all average men from religion to philosophy, from traditional habit to rational conduct, from argument to reasoning. The average Athenian continued faithful to the old tradition long after the philosophers opposed it, as is implied in all the plays of Aristophanes. But it is also implied in those plays that the average man was troubled as his forefathers had not been. Perhaps the majority were absolutely incompetent to understand the change which had occurred in the minds of the few ; and yet no one could avoid the germ of new thought which was in the air. You may hate the new-fangled ideas which you despise so much that you cannot trouble to understand them ; you may even laugh at revolutionaries whom you cannot refute, and by your laughter give yourself a momentary feeling that everything is still as it always was. Indeed laughter will give you a sort of courage. But into the midst of your stalwart traditionalism an uneasy fear may creep, and gnaw at your firmest beliefs and corrupt your most inveterate habit. Thus the old moral standard may be modified, even though no change is obvious in practice or belief, if the attitude of the average man is uncertain. The foundations may become insecure ; and the very insecurity will lead men to value new kinds of character and new kinds of life.

The importance of the attitude of Socrates then is not in that it was typical. It was never typical, even among those later Stoics who strove to imitate the master. But it was immensely effective.

We may divide his criticism of current beliefs and admirations from his practice with respect to traditional custom. Intellectually he criticises "Homer" and, in politics, the accepted moral standards of greatness. Practically he conforms to the practice of the *polis*, and yet belongs to a non-Athenian group; he is a "good citizen" and yet puts a limit to his allegiance.

The intellectual attitude of Socrates towards the tradition into which he was born may be seen, first, in the *Euthyphro*. The subject is the religious and moral standard implied in the life of the *polis*. It is this and nothing less which is being criticised. The contrast is between what is correct religious action and what is moral action, between holiness or piety and justice or virtue. It is not that Socrates stood for morality as opposed to religious practice, for he was not himself freed from the tradition which he was attempting to overcome. And his position was such as may be imagined to exist when it is not clear whether we are to contrast or to class together a religious act such as going to church and a moral act such as giving alms. The theory of morals is a discovery, as chemistry or physics is. Ethics arises out of an attempt to analyse experience. But in its early stages religion, which includes "what must be done," has nothing to do with morality. The purity that is required in early ritual is not moral but ceremonial; it consists in not having done many things, some of which are indeed immoral, some quite moral. Now so long

as religious practice continues, the confusion of moral and immoral also continues. Thus in early Christian times adultery is irreligious, but so also is any sexual intercourse; murder is an offence against God, but so also is eating meat on a fast day. The classification of acts as religious and irreligious not only obscures, it actually endangers the classification of acts as moral and immoral. And thus religious practice continually degrades not only the moral practice, but even the moral sense of believers; for the possibility of being religious and yet immoral, or moral and yet not religious, is proved by almost every page of human history. This confusion and its evil results are the first subject for the analytical criticism of Socrates.

Euthyphro, in the dialogue called by his name, is represented as simply the average good Athenian who knows the traditional view of religious action and has never thought out its relation to morality. He is driven by Socrates to admit that holiness is loved by the gods because it is holiness; it is not holiness because it is loved by the gods.[1] It is not the divine taste which makes certain acts religious. Euthyphro is trying to make morality out of religion, and he sees that morality cannot imply arbitrary whim or caprice in a deity. At last Socrates drives him to say that "piety and holiness are that part of justice which has to do with the attention which is due to the gods; and what has to do with the attention due to men is the remaining part of justice."[2] But as to attention to the gods, Socrates shows that the gods have nothing to gain from the act of prayer or sacrifice,

[1] Euth. 10. [2] id., 12 in fine.

since they are no better for it.[1] And yet they like it. So that either we are back again at the old mistake of supposing an act holy because it is to a god's arbitrary taste, or there is no such thing as service of the gods at all. For benefiting ourselves and our fellow men is by agreement that part of justice which is not the concern of religion.

The attitude of Socrates is quite consistent, but it is not the expression of any definite conclusion on these questions. He is clear that there is a distinction of good and evil action, and that the distinction is not dependent upon an arbitrary will. He sees, more obscurely, that there is some connection between that distinction and the traditional distinction between religious and irreligious action, but he is much puzzled that the two distinctions are not identical in kind, and he seems to be very doubtful indeed as to the purpose of prayer and sacrifice. He did, as we know, practise both! he may have felt some good to come from them, but he never for a moment thought them of the same importance as moral action. At least with respect to action having reference to our fellow men, he held that good and evil are in the nature of things and do not depend upon will, caprice or taste.

But if a distinction can be made between moral good and evil, independently of the will of any god, then we can make moral judgments concerning the gods. That is to say, we may refer their actions to a criterion which they have not established and which they cannot abolish. Certain actions are reported by our religious authorities as having been done by the gods, as that Cronos ate his children and Zeus bound his father. "I am displeased

[1] Euth., 15.

when I hear people say such things about the gods," says Socrates; "I expect that I shall be called a sinner because I doubt these stories." [1] Euthyphro, however, is willing to accept all the old traditions, not troubling to apply a moral test to the actions reported of the gods. The contrast is dramatically cogent, and, as far as we know, historically correct. This is the distinction between the attitude of Socrates and that of the average Athenian. Neither doubts the existence of certain superhuman powers called divine, but to Socrates the dilemma is real; either the stories about the gods are false or the gods are not worthy of worship.[2] He chooses, apparently without any definite reason, to suppose that the stories are false; and he is thus in almost the same position as Huxley was in the famous controversy about the Gadarene swine. Huxley says in effect to the modern Euthyphro, Mr. Gladstone,—Either the story of the Gadarene swine is false or Christ's "destruction of other people's property is a misdemeanour of evil example." [3] It offends the orthodox Euthyphro to hear that the story is false; but it offends him just as much to hear that Christ's action may be judged by a moral standard which is independent of him. Huxley chooses to suppose that the story is false. And neither Huxley nor Socrates refers to the third possibility—that there may have been no such persons as those whose character is in dispute. For indeed we may grant that it does not really matter to the argument of

[1] Euth. 6.

[2] So of the heroes who are the canonised saints of Greece: "Let us oblige our poets to admit, either that the deeds in question were not the deeds of these heroes or else that these were not the children of gods." Rep. 391.

[3] Huxley, Essays, V., p. 309.

Socrates whether the gods exist or not. The problem in the *Euthyphro*, as in the *Republic*, is as to the moral standard. What sort of ideal are we to accept? What sort of character are we to admire? Are we to admire Hamlet, for example, or Macbeth? We need not first discover whether there were ever historical or "real" characters of the same kind as are presented to us by Shakespeare; for the moral criterion is not a test of existence but of value.

Socrates may not have thought the question of the moral character of gods independent of the doubt as to their existence; for, apart from Plato's attempts to prove (in the *Laws*) the existence of gods, hints are put into the mouth of Socrates himself that the problem was in the air, and that he had thought of it.[1] But it is sufficient here to note that he considers the existence proved of some reality which may be called divine. The problem of moral character, however, in the argument of Socrates will hold whether there are gods or not. For he says, in effect, the current moral ideal of character is deficient. The stories of the gods are "offensive and not to be repeated in our city," lest the evil-doer suppose that he is only doing what the first and greatest of the gods have done before him.[2] The character of what is worshipped has a direct effect upon the moral character of the worshipper, and thus the creations of one generation react upon the morality of future generations—some-

[1] Cratylus, 400, etc.

[2] Rep. 378. οὗτοί γε οἱ λόγοι χαλεποί . . . . οὐδὲ λεκτέον νέῳ ἀκούοντι, ὡς ἀδιῶν τὰ ἔσχατα οὐδὲν ἂν θαυμαστὸν ποιοῖ, οὐδ' αὖ ἀδικοῦντα πατέρα κολάζων παντὶ τρόπῳ, ἀλλὰ δρῴη ἂν ὅπερ θεῶν οἱ πρῶτοί τε καὶ μέγιστοι.

times, of course, for good, but sometimes for evil. The character of Moses may be an influence for good, but it may be also evil; and we know how the bloodthirsty vengeance said to be inculcated by Jehovah against the Amalekites actually did incite the devout Puritans to reckless slaughter.

"But surely," says Socrates, "God is really good and must be so represented?" Hence he cannot be the cause of all things. "On the contrary he is the author of only a small part of human affairs: of the greater part he is not the author; for our evils far outnumber our goods: and the good we must ascribe to no other than God, while we must seek elsewhere and not in him the causes of evil." [1] God cannot have done the ludicrous and misleading acts which are reported of him; for "God is a being of perfect simplicity and truth, both in deed and word, and neither changes in himself nor imposes upon others, either by apparitions or by words, or by sending signs, whether in dreams or in waking moments." [2]

It is not so clear to us now as it would be to the first readers of Plato that Socrates is here represented as criticising and condemning the very core of the moral tradition of Greece and of Athens. The accepted influences of his time are brought to the bar of something which, it was asserted, was superior to them; and although the philosopher might call that *reason*, to the average man it seemed to be intellectual vanity using "private judgment." Socrates said that "Homer" spoke falsely: and he adduced

[1] Rep. 379*b*. *cf.* what is said above about the devil. We see here the presentation of the case for the necessity of a devil. Unless evil is regarded as in some sense always and ultimately opposed to good, we tend to underrate its importance.

[2] Id., 382. A direct attack on Iliad II. init.

as truth not historic facts but moral judgments. That is to say it was really a question of conflict between ideals. This sort of character and this sort of life is in the tradition, and this other sort is the noble and the good. Criticism could not be clearer.

Socrates adopted the same sort of intellectual attitude towards the men admired by his contemporaries. He found as admired models, first, the successful. The maintainers of "force" as the ultimate criterion of value in political action were not few in Greece; and they were considerably more consistent than modern Nietzscheans. Thrasymachus in the *Republic* and Callicles in the *Gorgias* speak for many more than would like to hear their moral standards so clearly expressed. It comes to this—the man really to be admired is he who has force enough to get what he wants; the state which is best is the most powerful state. Those who believe otherwise are sentimentalists who cannot see facts, "real-politik," and so on; and Socrates is against this standard of value, says Callicles, only because he is "effeminate" and has no "practical experience" of "real life," but "flies from the busy market-place in which men become distinguished and creeps into a corner and talks in a whisper with three or four admiring youths." [1] We need not pursue the argument. The moral standard advocated is "the strong man" as a model for the individual and "big battalions" for the state. And the crushing Socratic reply will never affect the Thrasymachus and Callicles of our own day, any more than it made a difference to the admirations of the average Athenian. He says,

[1] Gorgias, 485*b*.

however, that the more admirable character is the man who knows the good of others and, being temperate or ordered in his own activities, brings the good into being. The state is best which promotes the fullest and finest life.

But, secondly, the admiration of Socrates' contemporaries is given not merely to violent men and states but to the actual achievements of the past. "Did you never hear," says Callicles, "that Themistocles was a good man, and Cimon and Miltiades and Pericles, who is just lately dead, and whom you heard yourself?"[1] To take the point in modern times one must consider who the men are whose monuments are the most prominent in London, Berlin or Paris. We still say as Callicles did: "Those men once made our state great: now, of course, we have only trivial politicians." And the reply of Socrates comes across the years: "You praise the men who feasted the citizens and satisfied their desires, and people say that they have made the city great, not seeing that its swollen and ulcerated condition is to be attributed to these elder statesmen; for they have filled the city full of harbours and docks and walls and revenues and all that, and have left no room for justice and temperance."[2] It is a crushing indictment of our admired grandfathers, or rather of ourselves for admiring those of our grandfathers most who have left us material gain. It will be said by Callicles that Themistocles and the rest fought and worked for honour or prestige or even liberty; for these are words which are always useful in covering with a cloak of glory the desire for wealth and power; and we need not discuss here the truth of the charge

[1] Gorgias 503. [2] id., 518.

made by Socrates against the spirit of Athens. There is no modern state against which the same charge could not be made. The point of interest to us now is that, true or false or only exaggerated, the view adopted by Socrates is opposed to the accepted ideals, individual and social, of his time.

Intellectually, then, his attitude even towards the established administration was not the traditional. In religious and moral theory as in political conceptions of value he was an adverse critic of Athens. And yet there is no Athenian in history who can be said to have loved Athens better. I thought in this manner and I spoke so, he declared, because Athens was dear to me. "My excellent friend," I used to say, "you are a citizen of Athens, a city which is very great and very famous for wisdom and power of mind; are you not ashamed of caring so much for the making of money and for prestige and for honour? Will you not think or care about wisdom and truth and the perfection of your soul?" [1] But the Athenians did not understand this kind of admiration for Athens.

It is not strange that Greek ideals should involve on the one hand the admiration for Athens of the fifth century and the enthusiasm for old gods and men of ancient days, and on the other hand the condemnation by Socrates of so much that was admired. For the finest quality of a great tradition is the possibility it gives of continuous progress. The end has come when no one can turn his eyes away from the past, or when the greatness of our state is held to be a thing already achieved. It was to urge Athens forward that Socrates, her greatest

[1] Apology, 29. Indeed the whole of the Apology is on this theme.

son, condemned her accepted ideals. And after all, as we shall see in his practical activities, although he condemned the idols of the *polis*, Socrates never forgot the element of good which remained in the tradition.

What practical effect upon the actions of Socrates had this critical attitude? He seems in the first place to have acted as far as he could in accordance with general religious custom. This gives Xenophon his ground for expressing surprise that the charge against Socrates should have been irreligion; since it is clear that so far as outer conformity went Socrates never stood aside. We must imagine him taking part in the festivals of the *polis* to which we have referred above, and seeing in them perhaps much more than the average Athenian did. For it often happens that a revolutionary values his tradition much more highly and derives from it much more insight than those very traditionalists do who condemn the revolutionary for being disloyal.

Socrates allows it to be taken for granted that he follows the usual Athenian practice in religion. In the course of a half-ironic dispute, the point of which is the futile subtlety of Sophists, he says: "In the way of religion I have altars and temples domestic and ancestral and all that other Athenians have." "You have," replies Dionysodorus, his opponent, "Apollo, Zeus, and Athena, . . . they are your gods." "Yes," says Socrates, "they are my lords and ancestors."[1] He is represented at the opening of the *Republic* as going down "to the Piraeus with Glaucon the son of Ariston, to offer up prayer to the goddess, and also from a wish to see

[1] Euthydemus, 302.

how the festival, then to be held for the first time, would be celebrated." He is "very much pleased with the native Athenian procession; though that of the Thracians appeared to be no less brilliant." "We had finished our prayers and satisfied our curiosity," he says; and then they return to the city.[1] It was a new festival in honour of Bendis, a Thracian goddess, and the interest was obviously in part that of all sight-seers; but with the average men present Socrates offers up his prayers and, as we may gather from the conclusion of the *Phaedrus*, he could do that sort of thing well. He had, as he says of himself, "enough religion for his needs."[2] The interest, although in some way religious, was certainly not theological, and it may have been in part that of an educated man in what is going on around him. For Socrates was too fine to despise what he himself could not use, if only it were of use to others. But he deals in a summary fashion with the futile attempt to rationalise traditional beliefs which passed current as "liberal" thought. At the opening of the *Phaedrus* the scene is outside the walls on the banks of the Ilissus. Socrates and the young Phaedrus are looking for a cool spot to sit with their feet in the water, and they find one about a quarter of a mile above a ford at the temple of Artemis where also is an altar to Boreas. Phaedrus asks Socrates whether he believes that Boreas really carried off Orithyia, and Socrates answers: "The wise are doubtful and I should not be singular if, like them, I too doubted. I might have a rational explanation that Orithyia was playing with Pharmacia when a northern gust carried her over the neighbouring rocks: and this

[1] Rep. 354. [2] Phaedrus, 242.

being the manner of her death she was said to have been carried away by Boreas. (One might thus get rid of a personal wind and yet continue to say the creed.) There is a discrepancy, however, about the locality; according to another version of the story she was taken from the Aeropagus and not from this place. Now I quite acknowledge that these allegories are very nice, but he is not to be envied who has to invent them; much labour and ingenuity will be required of him, and when he has once begun he must go on and rehabilitate hippocentaurs and chimeras dire. Gorgons and winged steeds flow in apace, and numberless other inconceivable and portentous natures. And if he is sceptical about them, and would fain reduce them one after another to the rules of probability, this sort of *crude philosophy*[1] will take up a great deal of time. Now I have no leisure for such enquiries; shall I tell you why? I must first know myself, as the Delphian inscription says: to be curious about that which is not my concern, while I am still in ignorance of my own self, would be ridiculous. And therefore I bid farewell to all this: the common opinion is enough for me.[2] For, as I was saying, I want to know not about this, but about myself: am I a monster more complicated and swollen with passion than the serpent Typho, or a creature of a gentler and simpler sort, to whom Nature has given a diviner and lowlier destiny?" [3]

To understand the revolutionary nature of the

[1] ἀγροίκῳ τινὶ σοφίᾳ, clodhopper's wisdom, wooden-headed philosophy.

[2] πειθόμενος τῷ νομιζομένῳ περὶ αὐτῶν, almost "following the general custom or accepting what has been the traditional belief."

[3] Phaedrus, 231: Jowett.

attitude here adopted by Socrates we must imagine some person nowadays, still interested in the good that may come from religion, replying to a question as to whether he believes that Christ ascended into the blue heaven from the summit of Mount Tabor. He might say, "Historians are doubtful and I should not be singular if I doubted. But there are liberal theologians and idealist philosophers who give as a rational explanation that the appearance of Christ disappeared here. There are a few difficulties about this: but the worst of it is that by this method you will have to find out some sort of truth in the idea of angels and Beelzebub and the portents of the Apocalypse. This sort of crude philosophy will take up much time, and I have other things to do. Let the creed stand as it does." We may thus understand how painful to the average Athenian was the Socratic attitude, and how perilously near blasphemy his reverence seemed to be.

To return to the *Phaedrus*, midday comes and the time when everything sleeps except the cicalas. Then Socrates tells, half laughingly, the myth of how these were once human beings and through love of singing forgot to eat and sleep. The Muses turned them into cicalas that they might always sing.[1] Socrates reacts to the spirit of the place like any other Greek. He too is willing to transform the commonplace in a poetic vision; and there cannot be anywhere a finer expression of such feeling than there is in the prayer he offers up, "when the heat is abated," to "the gods of the place." "Beloved Pan," he prays, "and all ye other gods who here inhabit, give me beauty in the inward soul, and may the outer and the inner man be at one.

[1] Phaedrus, 257.

May I count the wise man rich, and may my store of gold be such as only the good can bear." "That prayer," says Socrates, "is, I think, enough for me." [1] And to add commentary to it is almost an insult to the skill of Plato or to the intelligence of the reader. We have here a rendering of Socrates' practice which could hardly be surpassed for subtlety and charm. And the average Athenian might well be puzzled at the practical reverence of the man combined with his apparent carelessness about the content of tradition. If that had been all, however, that could be said about the actions of Socrates the charge against him would never have been formulated. He is, so far, a good Athenian with perhaps peculiar opinions and a too great tendency to criticise.

On the other hand the evidence is conclusive that Socrates belonged to what we should call a religious brotherhood. Not only have we the evidence of Aristophanes in the *Clouds* that Socrates was popularly believed to practise secret rites with a small company of friends; but the popular belief is confirmed by a careful reading of the Platonic dialogues. For Socrates is said to have had two quite different manners of speech, and even two quite different subjects of discussion, with two different companies of friends. There is, first, the general discussion of logical and ethical issues with Sophists and the rich young men; and, secondly, there is the profounder treatment of such problems as immortality when Socrates is speaking to a selected few. The popular imagination would easily identify the rich young men with the selected few; for what other criterion could they under-

[1] Phaedrus, 279.

stand for selection by a teacher of pupils except that they could pay well? For us, however, it is clear that Alcibiades for example did not belong to the Socratic inner circle.

This selected few formed a sort of religious brotherhood with Pythagorean and Orphic connections. The language of the *Phaedo* is saturated with the feeling of "mysteries." The position given to mathematical symbolism is Pythagorean. The idea of virtue as harmony or order is Pythagorean. The practice of "philosophy" as an ascetic life is Pythagorean. And the continual reference, when Socrates is among those who could understand, to the aloofness of the true philosopher, is in the manner of one who belonged to some other association than the *polis*. For in fact it was sufficiently well known (1) that the members of this brotherhood were young men with "new" views; (2) that they had a special science savouring of irreligion, and (3) that they had religious practices which were not those of the *polis*. Add only the air of mystery which surrounds some movement not generally understood in a time of great political excitement; and we understand both the practical life of Socrates and the suspicion with which it was regarded.

The ideal of action among the old school as we have said was "to do as the community does." Socrates may have done that; but he did more, and the other part of his practice was not μετὰ τῆς πόλεως. That is the sum of the charge against him on which he was ultimately condemned. And the charge is quite clearly proved. But we must allow also for certain non-modern elements in the mind of those who condemned him in order to assert the supremacy of allegiance to the *polis*. Religion

still meant action. It was what the Socratic brotherhood *did* or were suspected of doing which was dangerous. It was an unofficial rite, not a creed which was condemned; and even asceticism might be an ugly practice from this point of view. Secondly, such action, even if it were the turning of a model sphere, might be regarded as magical and effective in some uncanny way. The average Athenian would feel that evil influences were coming out of Socrates' thinking-shop.

The importance of this for our present purpose lies in the practical attitude of Socrates towards the sacredness of the *polis*. In the first place the Orphic-Pythagorean brotherhood was not Athenian, and by belonging to such a company Socrates doubtless appeared to the average Athenian to stand in sympathy outside the *polis*, much as a Roman Catholic in the reign of Charles I. might be imagined by his "communion with Rome" to stand in sympathy outside England. At the best it was a case of divided allegiance: at the worst it was an allegiance to something other than the average Athenians knew, which might, they thought, involve action not altogether patriotic. And we can understand how in a time of excitement the average Athenian might suspect the worst.

Secondly, by active communication with this brotherhood Socrates held closely to men like Cebes and Simmias (in the *Phaedo*) who belonged to groups politically hostile to Athens. If the legend of Euclides of Megara is true, the communication of Socrates with foreign enemies did not cease even during war. Who would not, then, suspect spying and treating with the enemy—or at any rate an allegiance which sat very loosely? And when

we add that every one knew that Socrates was generally in opposition politically even to a coalition government, what need is there to say more? He had obstructed the popular condemnation of the generals; he had opposed the opponents of democracy; and yet he did nothing to assist the restored democracy, and was always making sarcastic remarks about amateur politicians. Whether only as a public nuisance or as an active centre of disloyalty to the *polis*, the case against him was clear.

From the Socratic point of view the result of his life-work was not unexpected. Socrates knew and Plato acknowledged that a higher allegiance always seems to the average man a repudiation of all allegiance and an undermining of the securities of life. And indeed no method has yet been discovered for giving different treatment, especially in times of excitement, to crime which is below and to moral genius which is above the accepted practices of society. Neither the criminal nor the prophet think or act μετὰ τῆς πόλεως. Therefore the *polis* treats them similarly. We have in Socrates, then, (1) criticism of traditional standards in religion and politics, (2) international connections which seem to conflict with a supreme devotion to the *polis*, and (3) at least hesitation in assisting popular movements. It is to be hoped that it is not necessary to show that these are all practical expressions of a fine character. But if anyone still believes them to be signs of a lack of proper devotion to his country, no defence of Socrates is possible. On the other hand we have (1) his "conformity" to the rites of the city, (2) his ordinary service as soldier and citizen, and (3) his final refusal to evade the Law which condemned him to death. But is this inconsist-

ency? As to conformity we have seen that it is little more than good fellowship (aided by an undogmatic agnosticism). As to his service of Athens, he certainly never held that to imply any acceptance of all her policy. And as to the Laws his attitude is no repudiation of the claim made for the philosophers in the *Theaetetus* and the *Republic* to stand above the trivial affairs of any particular city. He refused to obey any command which might have been given for him to stop what he was doing.[1] He held by Athens, but there were quite definite limits to his allegiance. There were some acts to which no voice of any state or community could compel him. And when the crisis came which he had long expected he did not disguise the ultimate issue. He loved something which he called justice or truth better even than Athens; and as he was quite unable to make the cave-dwellers see these realities, he was condemned. Should he then have fled? He might very well feel that the alternative to dying was to be believed to be afraid of death. He may have been mistaken in his judgment. The world might not have condemned him as a coward if he had fled from Athens; and yet the fear that they might moved him to stay. Death, he held, was not so great an evil as the majority imagined. But that was not the chief reason for obedience to an Athens which condemned him to death, in spite of his refusal to obey the order to change his life. He stayed and died as the ultimate proof that he was not against Athens. To the average man the assertion of allegiance to something higher or other than "our country" always sounds like an allegiance to enemies of "our country"; and

[1] Apology 38 *sq.*

the charge against Socrates was in effect that he was anti-Athenian. His acceptance of the death penalty was his one possible reply to that charge. If he had gone into any other city, the charge would seem to have been proved: but as he willingly died by the hand of Athens he showed that he was not anti-Athenian. And so in life and in death he strove to unite an effort towards higher and nobler allegiances with a devotion to what was best in the tradition he condemned. His heart was never shaken. He held to the high faith in a divine reason which is supreme over the popular opinion. His intense love of his fellow Athenians never misled him into supposing that their actions were above criticism or that anything they wanted him to do or to stop doing must therefore be done or left undone. To the many his last words in the Apology were that he was certain the life which they condemned was right. To the few in the *Phaedo* he said that we are all children crying in the dark. To both he said that there is nothing finer or nobler in life than to seek, not in popular custom or traditional belief, but in one's own reason, the guidance for action.

Socrates was the model to whom not merely Plato and Aristotle, but Epicureans and Stoics looked, until the last rays of the Greek tradition faded from the world. His character had as many different imitators as his views had different and even discordant interpretations. Some held him a loyalist, others a rebel; some a fakir, others a diner-out; some a scholar, some a saint. And perhaps they were all right. . . . Such was Socrates. The light of his character falls upon every detail of ethical theory: it illuminates the

common plain of daily acts and the heroic heights of intelligence and virtue. And even to-day it is hard to write of Greek ideals without supposing that to have produced Socrates alone is a sufficient justification for the hopes of Athens and more than an excuse for her many failures. For there is no man who, having been so great, yet gives one more of the feeling that what he did and was is as nothing if compared to what may yet be done in that human art of which he was a master—a man of passion and of intelligence—" with a fierce heart and a strong head and the whole force of his heart devoted to keep the head above it cool."

CHAPTER XI

THE PHILOSOPHERS

THE two great Athenian philosophers of the fourth century accept in part, systematise and develop, the Athenian ideals of life and character. They also point beyond such ideals to others of a more complex and perhaps less practical kind. But in the main Plato and Aristotle are Athenian. Even in their criticism of Athens they belong to her rather than to Sparta. They were directly influenced by the customs and beliefs of Athens and they were recognised as important by contemporary Athenians.

In our time the philosopher often belongs to a small and exclusive class of "wise" men. Their controversies leave the average man cold, even when he hears of their existence. Their conclusions have no immediate effects upon ordinary life, and the average man is hardly aware of the names of those who teach or study philosophy. On the other hand the philosopher in modern times is hardly at all influenced by the current habits of thought or action. Perhaps he does not even meet men of the poorer classes, and he seldom condescends to speak of his subject with the ordinary educated man. His ethics and his metaphysics are not immediately affected by the religious practice or conventional beliefs of his time.

This segregate position is due not to any deficiency

of modern philosophers or the modern man in the street but to the increasing segmentation of modern society in respect of "interests," and it is partly for this reason that philosophy means now a special form of study and not a "way of life" as it did for Plato and Aristotle. Whereas in former times men were separated chiefly by geographical obstacles and distances, now that these have been almost overcome, we tend to be separated by differences of occupation. A common dwelling-place now does not necessarily bring the inhabitants into contact, each with the other. In the great city-regions no one knows his neighbours. And it is more and more possible for men to meet only those who are interested in the same segment of life, however far-off those others may dwell. Geographical or linguistic divisions are still sufficiently important, but the tendency of modern life seems to be in the direction of separating and uniting men in reference to occupation or interest; so that the modern man, in a society actually more complex, may be in touch with fewer differences of view than the ancient Athenian.

By contrast, in Athens of the fifth and fourth centuries the philosopher was compelled to be in contact with men who were interested in many different aspects of life. It was impossible for Plato or Aristotle to avoid conversation with shoemakers and merchants and politicians and "men about town." The philosopher walked in processions or at least attended popular fêtes. He was affected at every moment by what quite unphilosophic men were thinking and doing; and therefore his evidence for social life was perhaps more complex and was certainly more personal

than the evidence of the modern members of the "thinking" caste. He knew men and did not read statistics. On the other hand ordinary men were more immediately and continuously aware of what was going on in the Academy or the Lyceum than a modern business man, for example, in New York is aware of the Rockefeller Institute or of Columbia College. The Athenian people were proud of a great man who could attract followers, and troubled if they suspected the tendency of his teaching. It is true that the philosopher might have to suffer for the average man's knowledge of his existence. Protagoras and Socrates and Aristotle, and doubtless many others less acutely, were made aware that they were watched. But the result, except during moments of crisis or popular excitement, was that the thinker did not feel himself to be thinking in a vacuum.

With respect to the effect upon philosophers, nothing could be more unlike Oxford or Cambridge or Princeton than the position of philosophy in the midst of an active and varied city such as Athens. With all apologies,—the position of Manchester University or of Harvard is much more like that of the Philosophic Schools in Athens than is the position of Colleges in what is called a University Town. But even with the "new" universities the analogy is very slight, in so far as Athens was not a "one trade" town. "The Schools" in Paris may be our nearest parallel; and yet even there the influence of current life is not as acutely felt by thinkers as it was in Athens. Much as we may have gained, therefore, since the days of Plato and Aristotle, they had evidence for social and ethical facts of a peculiarly valuable kind. Athens

was always before them; and their ideals were Athenian even when they went beyond the average man in desiring consistent thought or intellectual insight. It is clear, then, that we may speak of Plato and Aristotle as Athenian in a sense in which we could not speak of a modern philosopher as representing the atmosphere or expressing the ideals of his city.

The evidence for this is abundant. Aristotle is obviously reporting and defending current practice in his treatment of slavery and of the position of women. He makes the best case he can in his theory of " the mean " for the average man's wisdom in the proverb " Nothing too much." And even Plato, who was less easily impressed by the average intelligence or the established order, was greatly influenced by the ordinary life of Athens. The dialogue form of philosophical argument is due to Athenian custom; and Plato gives us his experience of Athenian symposia and conversations in the public meeting-places. Indeed the " democratic man " and the others sketched at the end of the *Republic* seem to be rather reports as to the character of men Plato actually knew than abstract statements of different attitudes. The traditional customs and ceremonies affected his view of the world. The doctrine of Recollection and the use of Myth are due in great part to the Eleusinia and private " mysteries "; and the idea of immortality is modified by Orphism.

So much with respect to the matter of their philosophy; as to the manner—in both philosophers the prominence given to metaphors drawn from sculpture and painting is obviously Greek. The Ideas of Plato and the language he uses of them are

due to the εἶδος at which the sculptor looks, and the "participation" of it by "the material." This original metaphor, from the structure of matter or the "physique" of living bodies, had been developed in biological and geometrical theory; but the word still retained its old picturesque association.[1] Matter and form are in Aristotle frankly artistic rather than what we should call "scientific" ideas.[2] The "creative (poetic) mind" implies an artistic view of mental process.[3] And all this is in the region of metaphysics. In ethical theory Plato's ideal man is "finished off" by Socrates "in the manner of a skilful artist."[4] The ethical teacher is the true artist,[5] in the argument of the *Gorgias*. And in Aristotle's view of the good life, the metaphors of fine art are everywhere obvious.

But along with the influence of art we must allow for the influence of medical theory and practice in the formation of the philosophers' ethical views. This practice of medicine had given rise to the care of health among quite ordinary business men; for we have a book "On Diet" published before Plato wrote, which was obviously intended to be used, not by the "idle rich," but by the artisan, farmer or shopkeeper.[6] Life is supposed to be regulated by attention to rules of bodily hygiene. Disease is due to lack of order or harmony. Pleasure is a "filling up," pain a "privation." Hence health is

[1] *cf.* Taylor, *Varia Socratica*, 1st series V. on the words εἶδος, ἰδέα.

[2] Metaphysics 1033*b*.

[3] De Anima 430*a*, 12. *cf.* id. 426*a*.

[4] Rep. 540.

[5] Gorgias, 465 *sq.* *cf.* 503*b*.

[6] *cf.* Taylor *Varia Socratica*, 1st series, p. 238 note. The book may be found in Kuhn's text I. 631 sq. 3rd Book, p. 716.

a sort of democratic equality between the different impulses, and the excellence of the body is due to adjustment in reference to a mean.

The influence of all this on Plato and Aristotle is very obvious. Plato definitely identifies virtue with "health"[1] and Aristotle with a "mean." Their ethical metaphors are often medical, as in the famous description by Aristotle of the moral effect of tragedy. For the idea of purification or purgation of the emotions is, at least in part, medical.

Finally, lest it should be imagined that no exact thinking lay behind the systematic and extended research of Plato and Aristotle, we must note that many other philosophers had worked at the same problems. Unfortunately their works are only known to us in fragments, and these fragments give the impression of chance observations. It is, however, certain that the method and many of the conclusions which we now find in Plato and Aristotle were to be found in earlier work. Treatises were written and discoveries made both in the sphere of physical science and in that of political and ethical knowledge. These, as much as the beliefs and practices of the average man and the poets, Plato and Aristotle could use. And we must therefore now treat them as standing not only for the special insight of two very great minds, but for the hard work done by many who are known to us only by name. We should not forget such excellent sayings as those of Heracleitus—"Character is a man's fate" or "Much knowledge does not give sense" or "The senses without thought are blind." Philosophers continued the old fashion of proverbial philosophy, giving it a new turn in epigram. So Democritus

[1] *cf.* especially *Sophist*, 228.

is known by abrupt sentences which carry a little further the Greek feeling for knowledge in life. " Fools become wise by experience " ; " The teacher of fools is not reason but circumstance " ; and yet " Many without conscious reasoning live according to reason," and " The virtue of a man must be judged not only from his acts but from his intentions." Of general remarks we have " Not all relatives are friends, but only those with the same interests," and " He who wishes to live calmly must not overwork either for himself or for the state, but all he does must be done with due regard to his abilities and his strength. He must not be dragged on even by a favouring fortune." Such sayings indicate the general atmosphere of the intellectual world in which the work of Plato and Aristotle was produced ; and they must be taken to indicate not merely occasional flashes of insight but the steady progress of the discussion of moral problems. Indeed, the Greek attitude towards morality would not be understood unless we remembered that the Greeks were the originators of exact and systematic thought. Moral philosophy was, for them, a part of that great body of truth, mathematical, physical and historical, of which they laid the foundations. They were scientists as well as artists, and they prided themselves as much upon their mathematics and physics as upon their drama and sculpture.

CHAPTER XII

PLATO ON RIGHT ACTION

We may now turn to the statement and development of the Athenian ideal in Plato and Aristotle. The philosophers set themselves to discover what was implied in the common belief that one man was morally better than another. That comparing of men was the evidence in ordinary life of the ideal aimed at, for there was clearly a standard of comparison. The good man seemed to have more of a particular quality than the man who usually did wrong; and if you held that it was worth while to aim at being physically, intellectually and emotionally developed, there must be some possibility of showing what was admirable in such development. Thus two beliefs seemed to be implied in the attitude of the average man, (1)that some men, called "good," had in them what others had not, and (2) that this very thing was what it was well to acquire or to give to others in education. What this was, then, the philosophers set themselves to discover. Let us call it virtue or excellence (ἀρετή), understanding the word to mean "that which makes a man worthy of admiration."

The problem was first stated as a question whether a man could be made virtuous or excellent by teaching; and, since all genuine education seemed to imply that he could, the answer was given that

"virtue is knowledge." That is the phrase which opens the history of ethical theory, and it is the first statement of the Athenian ideal as explained by the philosophers. It is a phrase which was undoubtedly used by Socrates; and in all that follows from it we cannot well distinguish Socrates from Plato. But it is perhaps better not to comment upon the phrase, since it is not merely the meaning of the words or the opinion of Plato which is our interest. The problem of moral action and the ideal of life must remain central and the view taken of it by Plato secondary. We shall therefore not follow the historical order of the Platonic dialogues or the detail of the argument there given, but attempt to state in modern terms the first philosophic conclusion which was made with respect to the moral ideal in life and character.

The problem whether virtue can be taught was transformed into the question as to the nature of virtue itself, and that again into the simpler and more fundamental issue as to the nature of right action. Protagoras, in the dialogue to which his name is given, is questioned by Socrates as to his special qualifications; and since he claims to make men virtuous, he is asked what precisely he gives to them. His reply, with a subtle Platonic sarcasm, is given in a long sermon on the excellence of virtue.[1] This is obviously no reply at all. But it is still the practice of the reverend Protagorases of our day, who imagine that the moral problem is solved by telling men to be "good" or by dilating on the beauties of virtue. They tell us neither what to do nor why to do it. And Socrates is made to show that sermonising implies the two pernicious ideas that

[1] Protagoras 320.

we already know all that is to be known about right actions and, secondly, that we need not trouble to inquire *why* one action is right and the other wrong. The sermon-preacher, however, sees that punishment is supposed to make men better, and on the other hand that those who seem to have the most opportunity for being good are often vicious. These little difficulties he faces and passes on, with the remark that " we cannot help it." [1] The confusion, still common to-day, is admirably rendered. Protagoras does not see the distinction between good intentions, which cannot be taught, and the knowledge of right action which can. So Socrates indicates that " when a man preaches, I never can remember what it is all about " ; [2] and he returns to the original question, " What is it that you give to a man when you say you teach virtue ? " [3] There is at this point a dispute about " Texts " which is like the appeal to authoritative writings when the question is as to fact,—again a Platonic sarcasm. But the issue is at length clear. What can be taught is that certain actions have certain results, and all moral instruction, in so far as it is effective, is not an inducing of the pupil to mean well but a giving of information as to what results follow from certain actions. This is a sort of calculation.[4] In so far then, as " virtue," now meaning right action, is dependent on this " science," " virtue is knowledge." [5] We have thus arrived at a definite solution ; but it is a solution only of the problem as to what is given in education (i.e., knowledge of right action) not the solution of the general question as to the nature of " virtue." The method of calcula-

[1] Prot., 324. [2] id., 334,*b*. [3] id., 339.
[4] id., 357. [5] id., 361.

tion by which we are to discover right action is also indicated. "Pleasure" is not the only good, but in any life which is good pleasure is one element. Therefore pleasure can be used as a sort of indication of right action.[1] And we thus have a conception of the art of life, fundamentally Greek, but also philosophically exact.

An essential fact emerges from this,—the distinction between "meaning well" and doing right actions. When we study right action, we must put aside for a moment the problem of "the good will" and concentrate upon the action done. This action is to be judged morally, not by reference to the intentions of the man who does it. That is, we put aside "virtue," in our sense of the word, which is too vague a term, in order to discuss "justice" or right action.[2] And although we may give a man credit for being "virtuous" if his intentions are good, we also demand of our *ideal* man that his actions shall be right. This latter element we can develop in action by teaching, and in that far "virtue is knowledge." The ideal man is he who has learnt what it is right to do. We condemn the action of burning heretics as wrong; but we may regard the well-intentioned Inquisitor as a "virtuous," if not an ideal man. The man, however, who is most worth admiration is he who not only intends to do right, but knows what it is right to do.

[1] Prot. 35 (b). The subtlety of this is not often noticed. Pleasure is not *the* good. Plato never says "good is happiness," but of many good things, pleasure is one: and of all action which leads to "good life" (or well-being) pleasure must be *one* of the results.

[2] The Greek word ἀρετή will still bear the weight of the argument, but the English word "virtue" breaks down here because of its intimate association with *intentions*.

The obvious difficulty, that one may know what it is right to do and yet not do it, may be met in two ways. First, Socrates would say that true knowledge compels.[1] If a man knows, in the real and not in the superficial or formal sense, what it is right to do, he must do it. For knowledge is not a calm acquaintance but a passionate adhesion to facts. No man does evil willingly ; but only because he supposes it to be good : and in any case it is more polite to suppose that what is wrong with the evil-doer is his knowledge and not his intentions ! The sermoniser abuses his congregation ; the moral teacher instructs them. But secondly, even supposing that a man may not do what he knows it is right to do, nevertheless action which is right contains in it something more than good intention ; and that something more can only be put into it by knowledge. Therefore if morality can be taught at all, one must suppose that it is in some sense knowledge. One cannot teach a man to want the right thing—though one may influence his taste —but he can be taught what is the right thing to want. And indeed we may best see what is correct in the phrase that moral excellence in action depends upon knowledge by understanding to what it is opposed. Socrates and Plato were really opposing the two entirely inconsistent views of the average man—views held even to-day—that (1) nobody really knows what is right or no exact and universal knowledge of morality is possible, and that (2) we know it already ! The average man takes it

[1] Prot. 352. Socrates says : The many think knowledge a poor slave liable to be dragged about by passion, pleasure, pain, love and fear. But is it not a noble thing well fitted to govern mankind ? Protagoras replies—Wisdom and knowledge are of all human things the mightiest.

for granted that what he thinks right is right and, when driven to doubt, he takes refuge in the relativity of all standards of right! Plato and Socrates say that we can know what it is right to do, but that we can know it only by study of the subject.

How then are we to distinguish the knowledge of morality (right action) from other kinds of knowledge? In the *Meno* Plato urges the problem of knowledge. It is shown to be of two kinds, one, an awareness of certain objects (of which we may not be conscious before they are brought to mind and which we are therefore said to "remember") and the other based upon calculation, which is, as it were, "popular." This latter is called "right opinion" [1] which is in "moral-social action what divination is in religion." This gives a sort of ready-reckoning about what it is right to do; and this *in fact* is what people depend upon; but if they had exact knowledge they would be able to say why one act was right and another wrong. It remains the ideal that we should really know, and not merely divine the right. Again, the knowledge of what it is right to do is scientific and not emotional. As cookery is to medicine (the real knowledge of what is good for the body) so is "speechifying" to the real knowledge of right and wrong.[2] It is not the knowledge of how to do what you want to do nor is it the knowledge of what most men want to do.[3] People are always counting heads irrespective of their contents. They are always trying to discover what it is right to do by taking a vote on it. So Isocrates, the simple-minded contemporary of Plato, defends his own teaching by saying that he is no abstract theorist, he teaches only

[1] Meno, 97. [2] Gorgias, 465. [3] id., 472.

what is recognised by all![1] And once again, the knowledge of what is right is not knowledge of what will bring pleasure, for some acts bring pleasure which are not right; "pleasure then, like everything else, is to be sought for the sake of that which is good and not that which is good for the sake of pleasure."[2] And besides most men admit that some pleasures may be "bad," as for example the pleasure of believing a false opinion;[3] and other pleasure may be "mixed with pain," as for example the pleasure of scratching when there is itching.[4]

So far we see only what is not the knowledge of what is right; and now we must say positively what it is. It is the knowledge we most need, that of *ends*, not of means. For the knowledge of how to get what you want implies that you know already what you should want (i.e., what you need); and this is precisely what is lacking. The ideal man is not he who knows what he wants, but he who wants what he needs. Hence, to put it into modern terms, what we most need is not more power over nature (physical science) nor more command over men (psychology, or popular "politics"), but more knowledge of what to do with such power over nature and such control of men as we have. And yet no one, as Socrates and Plato say, seems to value sufficiently this knowledge of what it is worth while to do or to have. Indeed most men either think they know enough as to the end of human action or they think that the end cannot be known

[1] Antid., 184. "Teachers of moral philosophy differ from each other and from the world as to what is virtue: the virtue which I inculcate is recognised by all."

[2] Gorgias, 500*a*. [3] Philebus, 42. [4] id., 46.

exactly and independently of this or that man's desire.

Here the Athenian ideal of knowledge as essential to the good life becomes clear and consistent. It is clear that one may will what is right and do what is wrong; and in order to do what is right, it is useful or perhaps necessary to know what it is right to do. For, although one may happen to do what is right without such knowledge, the practice is haphazard and insecure. No knowledge can be more valuable than the knowledge of right action; and moral progress, individual or social, means not mere good intentions, but an increasing knowledge of what it is right to do. What we want to know, then, is not *how* to do anything, but *what* to do; and this implies that we must discover what actions are, absolutely and independently of our special desires, right. The fundamental distinction having been made between good intentions and right actions, it remains to be said how we distinguish right from wrong action; and this is done by reference to *consequences;* for the calculation to which Socrates is made continually to refer is a calculation of consequences.

The consequences of right action are intrinsically good; and they are agreed to be, at least in part, states of mind. "The good," says Socrates, "which both you and I affirm to have the property of making all men happy is some state or disposition of the soul."[1] And that state of soul which is the result of right action is described as a harmony or a symmetry. The two metaphors are complementary; for we must understand Plato's implication that we have here gone beyond the range of

[1] Philebus, 116.

scientific formula. The "arrangement" metaphor is in the *Gorgias*. "The good soul will be that in which there is order" (κόσμος)'[1] And although "arrangement" (τάζις) is what is to the Greek mind most striking even in harmony, yet we may count it another metaphor in the *Republic* when Plato says that right action will "set the principles of the soul in tune together."[2]

The ultimate metaphysical issue as to the nature of what is intrinsically, eternally and universally good is not clearly stated in the Platonic dialogues. We may well believe that the omission is intentional; and we shall see the reason when we discuss Plato's ideal man. In the *Republic* we read "let us put aside for the present all enquiry into the real nature of the chief good."[3] There certainly is an apparent contradiction in "saying that men are ignorant of what is good and then implying that they know what it is"; but there we must leave it now. So far, then, concerning (1) the distinction between knowledge of right and the intention to do right, (2) the kind of knowledge (ends and not means) and (3) the method by which this knowledge comes (calculation of consequences). But before we pass on we may remark upon the importance of all this to the conception of the moral ideal. The original interest remains. The teaching of "virtue' is the reason for our inquiry into its nature. And we have now discovered that what may be taught is a distinction between right and wrong action. Thus ethics becomes scientific and its propositions have that universality and exactness which alone makes knowledge transmissible to others or valuable to them

[1] Gorgias, 504*a*. *cf.* Burnet, Greek Phil., p. 177.
[2] Rep., 443. [3] Rep., 505.

when transmitted. Ethics, therefore, is a study of the nature of things and not a mere record of customs.

In early times and to primitive minds in all times there is no distinction between what is generally done or what your grandfather did, and what "ought" to be done. The study of "custom" then appears to be the study of morality. Thus teaching morality is only teaching what was once done or what is now done by most people. It is the teaching not of principles but of general statements concerning historical or contemporary facts.[1] And the learner gains, not a capacity for the judgment of moral issues, but a ready acquiescence in what is common. This is "good form." This is what morality means for Xenophon. It is what is meant by the majority in every age; and it is still what most men believe to be morality, although they may say otherwise. It is the reason why they are more offended when any one acts or thinks differently from his fellows than when he does fashionable acts which have the most evil consequences. It is the reason why moral progress is so slow; and the reason why the moral leader is usually condemned as immoral.

Now this situation is secure so long as there is no contact between men with different traditions, customs and beliefs, and no acquaintance with the changes which history reveals. Moral provincialism is the only security for the idea that right action is what the majority of your acquaintances do. But it begins to appear that in Athens one thing is done and in Persia another. The old school shut their

[1] So in the case of "what one ought to believe," the old school mean by that only "what is or was usually believed."

ears. The wilder sort rush into moral relativism. And Socrates and Plato maintain that all will be well if we think out what is right and the reasons why it is right.

It is seen, then, that in order to find out what ought to be done it is not enough to know what your national customs are, for (*a*) other customs exist at present in other places, and (*b*) every kind of act has been done in the past. But men do make distinctions in the value they attach to different customs, and therefore even the old school really support those whom they most fear, for they use *reason*. Thus we arrive at the most important conclusion that right action is distinguished from wrong in accordance with general principles and not by reference to historical or contemporary habits.

We must also note that, according to Plato, the reason why an action is right can always be given and the knowledge of the reason is almost as important as the knowledge of which class of actions is right. This implies that morality does not depend upon a command, and that moral obligation is not of the same kind as the obligation involved in civil law. The *origin* of morality in a group may be command by superiors. That is an historical issue ; but in the discussion of the nature of morality we must assert that the basis of morality is not authority. The reason why we do an action, therefore, is of fundamental importance ; for the teaching of such reasons and not the inculcation of commands or precepts is moral instruction. And morality itself is insecure so long as men are uncertain *why* they believe the actions to be right which they accept as right.

This gives precision and importance to the Athenian ideal as to the value of thought in practical life. If thinking can show us (1) which actions are right, and (2) why they are right, if it can make morality more secure than authority can, and if it can make of the moral life a fine art rather than a mere artisan's habit, then we have not repudiated but fulfilled what was best in the Athenian spirit.

CHAPTER XIII

PLATO ON THE IDEAL MAN

THE importance of a knowledge of what is right being recognised, the result of such knowledge is next in question. This knowledge is valued for its effects, and the governing conception is therefore that of an ideal man. All men are guided, however feebly, by their admiration for character, and their actions are such as they hope may produce this character or something like it in themselves. All men have in that sense an ideal, and there may be something admirable in what most men admire; but to Plato the most admirable type of character is one which few men can even understand. The ideal man in the Socratic-Platonic language is the φιλόσοφος. In the Platonic dialogues that word is used to indicate what is noblest and most worthy of admiration in character; and it would be a mistake to translate it "philosopher" without any comment, for it means rather "saint" than "intellectual," and yet it is fundamental in Plato that we cannot divide the two.

In many points Plato is simply Athenian or typically Greek. He expects bodily beauty and suppleness, intellectual ability and emotional interests. These are taken for granted in his description of the ideal man, or they are referred to in passing. Those for whom he wrote would readily suppose him to accept as obvious such elements of excellence; and therefore he did not emphasise their value. He

is also in agreement with the majority of Athenians in their admiration for a quick wit ; and he supposes, as they did, that an ideal man will feel the beauty of form and colour and rhythm ; since the harmonious ordering of impulses is ideal. So far Plato is simply Greek.

Again, Plato leaves little doubt anywhere in his writings as to his opinion of the normal and average virtues. They are worthy of all reverence and are, of course, immeasurably more worthy of admiration than the glory of conquest or the domination over others which are, secretly or openly, admired by the majority. For action is either productive and creative or it is merely acquisitive ;[1] and although the majority may admire acquisitiveness, whether it be the activity of a general or of a vermin-catcher,[2] yet the best activities of man, like art and agriculture, aim at production and not at destruction. Further, as the body may be either diseased or deformed, so may the soul. Vice is disease and ignorance is deformity ; and of these two we must be rid in order that the activities of the soul may be free.[3] This common humanity is the basis of all ideal life ; and, whatever be said of the heroic heights of excellence in our ideal, we must not be supposed to repudiate or to undervalue this basic virtue which divides the real man from the lustful, the domineering or the savage.

But Plato's ideal contains some elements of exceptional quality. These are expressed in two ways. The ideal man is sometimes said to be divinely mad, and at other times to have the eye of his soul fixed upon the Form of Good. This may be taken to mean, in modern phraseology, that in an ideal

[1] Sophist, 219. [2] id. ibid. [3] id. 228.

character one should find both emotional inspiration and insight. But Plato is not willing to divide deep emotion from keen intelligence, and we must therefore separate them here only for the purposes of explanation.

The height of emotion is expressed in the *Phaedrus*. It is a madness or "an inspired departure from established usages." It is a sort of "love, with philosophic talk," which is described in the *Symposium*, where it is said that what relates to love or passion is to be discovered through a continuous and increasing exaltation.[1] This leads at last to that vision of beauty unalloyed in which the ideal man becomes the friend of God and immortal, thereby accomplishing what, as a philosopher, he set out to do. Philosophy is therefore a kind of life and not a subject to be studied; and it is, further, a life of the emotions which may be called love. The ideal man begins his departure from the commonplace in the discovery which, in Plato, is always connected with the contact between persons. This is thoroughly Greek. Socrates says that he would like the country but for lack of companionship; and we cannot imagine Plato's ideal man going out to find his highest emotion among stones and trees; for this would be secondary.[2] In the contact of persons is

[1] Symposium 211.

[2] Contrast the mediæval conception of the ideal monk. "You will find in stones and trees what no master can teach," says Bernard of Clairvaux, writing to the founder of Fountains Abbey. The Platonic Eros is always a passion which originates in the perception of beauty in another *person*; and the beauty is always physical as well as intellectual, although Socrates is very careful to say that of the two intellectual or mental beauty is the attraction which gives the best starting-point for "philosophy." *cf.* Bion: "Blessed are they that love, for they shall be loved in return."

the first illumination ; and therefore Plato is scornful of books as conveying " philosophy." Then the true passion is caught from every kind of contact ; and the world, which to the practical man is just so much food and clothing and the means to obtain these, seems to the philosopher to thrill with the near presence of what is most divine.

There is no doubt of the intensity of the emotion which this is intended to convey ; and the ideal man is therefore passionate. He is not swayed or troubled, and in that sense he is not moved as men are who are generally accounted to have passions. Indeed, Plato is very insistent upon his calmness ; but it is the calm of intensity, not of apathy. For the word which runs through all Plato's descriptions of ideal life is *love*. The connections of the word are not repudiated, except in so far as they imply an emotion which is easily satiated. For Eros, like our Love, may mean anything, from the transitory impulse to sexual gratification or the ungovernable passion which sways the crowd, to the force " that moves the sun and the other stars." It is necessary therefore for us to distinguish the emotion which is called love in the popular novel from the flame which burns at the heart of the world. The majority of men do not understand this latter, much less have they even a momentary experience of it. But this alone is the Eros to which Plato refers ; and this alone is the element in the ideal life of which we speak here. It is difficult to speak of this more adequately or to describe it more splendidly than Plato did.

Such enthusiasm is the reason for a life which, in the accepted phrase, is ascetic, since no one lives always on the heights. Even if a man could, he

should not ; for he must come down to the inhabitants of the ordinary world. But the moments of madness or of vision are to be used throughout life ; and philosophy is therefore a discipline. The discipline is described in two ways. It is in the first place a continual self-denial with respect to bodily sensations of a violent kind, sometimes even a repudiation of the Greek delight in seeing and hearing much and variously. And, secondly, it is a preparation for death. As to self-denial, the language of Socrates in the Platonic dialogues is recognised to be Pythagorean and Orphic. It is the language of a religion not very different in its practices from that of St. Francis of Assisi. "Brother Ass," the body, must be controlled. "The true philosopher is temperate and refrains from all the pleasures of the body and does not give himself up to them . . . because when the soul of any man feels vehement pleasure or pain, she is forced at the same time to think that the object, whatever it be, of those sensations is the most distinct and truest, which it is not." [1] Asceticism, therefore, is to be practised lest we be absorbed in the senses and lest we be misled, "being dragged away to the things which never remain the same."

On the other hand "those who rightly engage in philosophy study only dying and death." The soul of a philosopher longs to be released from her "prison-house" ; and indeed the body is a tomb (σῶμα, σῆμα) in the Pythagorean metaphor. The development of anti-sensualism and the contemplation of death had abnormal results in mediæval Europe and India. We of the twentieth century, therefore, cannot judge quite fairly the

[1] Phaedo, 82.

attitude of Socrates and Plato; for we see the abnormalities more clearly than the original idea. But as it stands in the text of Plato the ideal man is simply to avoid excess, to keep "in training," and to face the fact of death lest "the child which is in each one of us should be afraid of death as if it were a bugbear."[1] The *Phaedo*, in which these words occur, is a study of the idea of death only and not a complete philosophy. We must allow for that. But in other dialogues also it is clear that Plato expects his ideal man to stand unmoved before the spectacle of his fate, either singing a charm against fear or finding a raft on which to sail the untravelled sea.[2] In both these ideas, asceticism and the contemplation of death, Plato departs from the orthodox Greek tradition; for although it is utterly and ludicrously false to suppose that life to the Greeks was joyful and lighthearted, yet they cannot be said to have ever repudiated bodily sensation. And since our purpose here is not to set out the Platonic system, but to treat it only as an expression of Greek ideals, we shall say no more of that part of Plato's teaching which is not Greek. It must be remembered, however, that (1) it is not therefore "Eastern" or "Egyptian." There is no reason why Plato's asceticism should not be individual, as the attitude of Shelley, though un-English, was certainly not borrowed from the tradition of other countries. And it must also be remembered that (2) Plato never suggests asceticism as a universal practice. This is not an age in which the control of impulse is understood or approved even by the few; and therefore the conception need not be further developed here; but it might be

[1] Phaedo, 77. [2] Id., 114.

argued that Plato is right in supposing that the highest enthusiasm and insight cannot be used in normal life without asceticism and, on the other hand, that only asceticism keeps the eye bright and the spirit keen for the possibility of new visions.[1]

The quality of insight in the ideal man is described chiefly in the *Republic*. First, there is said to be an important difference between opinion and knowledge. Knowledge is an immediate contact with objects, which may be understood by the metaphor of intellectual vision. The man who "sees" is compared, in the famous simile of the Cave, with the person whose eyes have beheld the sun and its light upon objects, when the eyes of others have only seen the shadows of the real. The whole myth is a subtle reversal of the popular conception of the philosopher. As we have seen, Aristophanes, in the *Clouds*, probably uses a common idea of the Socratic school when he supposes them to be employed in grubbing about below the earth to see "the things under the earth."

The interests of the philosopher seem to the vulgar to be in the obscure and cavernous recesses of the obvious.[2] So philosophy itself has been described, even in modern times, as the toil of a blind man in

[1] There is a mean "asceticism" by which men refuse to be drunk because drink costs money or because of a headache next morning. This is expressly repudiated by Plato in the *Phaedo*. The Platonic asceticism is a discipline for attaining more intense emotions and experiences, not a repudiation of all feeling. It is, therefore, to be considered always in connection with the Platonic conception of love or passion. Nothing could be more unlike the asceticism of the saints of the desert, with their fear of personal affection.

[2] This is expressed in the proverbial view of philosophy by the saying that "Truth is at the bottom of a well." Democritus uses a like metaphor,—"We know nothing clearly for Truth is in the depths." (Frag. 117.)

a dark room, searching for a black hat which is not there. The Platonic reply is that the true philosopher is the only person who is not in the dark cave. He lives in Truth, " that naked and open daylight that doth not show the masks and mummeries and triumphs of the world half so stately and daintily as candlelights." [1] He alone has ascended. He alone looks upward. And because his eyes are dazzled with too much light, not because he is accustomed to the obscure, he sees but feebly in the world of ordinary life.

In ordinary experience, however, the vision is not " instilled into blinded eyes " ; but " since there is a faculty residing in the soul of each person, just as we might suppose it to be impossible to turn the eye round from darkness to light without turning the whole body, so must this faculty be wheeled round, in company with the entire soul, from the perishing world, until it be enabled to endure the contemplation of the real world and the bright part thereof, which, according to us, is the Form of Good." [2] The process is, therefore, gradual by which men reach the ideal insight. And what they see is " in the world of knowledge, the limit of our enquiries, which can barely be perceived; but when it is perceived, we cannot help concluding that it is in every case the source of all that is bright and beautiful."[3]

We have come to that which needed explanation in our discussion of right and wrong action, to that which distinguishes the results of action as intrinsically good or bad. This is the Form of Good, an absolute reality which is independent of time and

[1] Bacon, Essay I.
[2] Rep., 518*b*.
[3] id., 517, *cf.* also 508, 509, for the Form of Good.

place. But in the published work of Plato, although we read the acknowledgment that " the enlightened are in a ludicrous difficulty if they can only explain the chief good as insight into that which is good ; " [1] yet only the metaphor of sunlight is used to explain the nature of the intrinsic good. For this is a peculiar quality of Platonic theory : it is in all his philosophy implied by Plato that there is a limit to the use of formula ; and in describing the ideal man's insight we have now reached that limit. The rest is myth. Whatever Plato said in his lectures, it is certain that he never published any further statement as to the sun which the ideal man beholds. In his letter to the friends of Dion he writes,—" There is not and there never will be any treatise of mine on these ultimates. . . others have tried to write of this, but they do not know what they attempt. I could myself do this better than any one, and I should consider it the proudest deed of my life as well as a signal benefit to mankind, to bring forward an exposition of Nature luminous to all. But I think the attempt would not be beneficial except to a few, and these require only slight direction to enable them to find it out for themselves ; to most persons it would do no good but only fill them with empty conceit of knowledge and with contempt for others. These matters cannot be communicated in words as other sciences are, but out of repeated debates on them and much social intercourse there is kindled suddenly a light in the mind, as from fire bursting forth, which, when once generated keeps itself alive." [2] This unexplained

[1] Rep. 505.
[2] Ep. VII., written in 353 B.C., *cf.* Grote, *Plato* I., p. 223, and Burnet, *Greek Philosophy*.

reality, however, is the object of the gaze of the ideal man; and seeing the real, the ideal man is rendered somewhat aloof from the majority of his fellows. "The lords of philosophy have never from their youth upwards, known the way to the Agora, or the Dicastery, or the council or any other assembly. . . . But the philosopher does not hold aloof in order that he may gain a reputation; the truth is that the outer form of him only is in the city; his mind, disdaining the littleness and nothingness of human things, is "flying all abroad" as Pindar says, measuring with line and rule the things which are under and on the earth and above the heaven. . . . When he is reviled he has nothing personal to say in answer to the civilities of his adversaries, for he knows no scandal of any one and they do not interest him. When he hears a tyrant or king eulogised he fancies that he is listening to the praises of some keeper of cattle . . . a swineherd, or shepherd, or goatherd, who is congratulated on the quality of the milk which he squeezes from them. . . . Then again he observes that the great man is of necessity ill-mannered and uneducated as any shepherd, for he has no leisure, and he is surrounded by a wall, which is his mountain-pen. . . . And when they sing the praises of wealth or family, he thinks that their sentiments only betray a dull and narrow vision in those who utter them, and who are not educated enough to look at the whole, nor to consider that every man has had thousands and thousands of progenitors, and among them have been rich and poor, kings and slaves, Hellenes and barbarians, many times over. But, O my friend, when he draws that other (the pettifogging politician) into upper air and gets him

out of his pleas and rejoinders into the contemplation of justice and injustice in their own nature and in their difference from one another and from all other things; or from commonplaces about the happiness of kings to the consideration of government, and of human happiness and misery in general, —when that narrow keen little legal mind is called to account about all this, he gives the philosopher his revenge." . . . Theodorus interrupts,—"If you could persuade everybody, Socrates, there would be more peace and fewer evils among men." And Socrates,—"Evils can never pass away. . . . Wherefore we ought to fly away from earth to heaven as quickly as we can; and to fly away is to become like God, as far as this is possible; and to become like him is to become holy and just and wise." [1]

So in the *Republic* the very highest task given to the trained intellects of the community is to fix their eyes upon the eternal good; and it is said that if their eyes can thus be held they are nevertheless the guides of all men, the seers upon the watch-towers of the world. They not only come down into the cave, in which all men live, but even in their moments of highest vision they cry out to men and tell them all that may yet be done.

It is at this highest point in his conception of the ideal man that Plato expressly refers to the capacities of women. Aristotle would have forgotten them long ago; and the average Athenian, who would not perhaps have understood the meaning of Plato even as applied to men, would have felt the philosopher's ideal to be simply fantastic when he heard it applied to women also. So nowadays, it is not the scientific or artistic genius who denies

[1] Theaetetus, 174. Jowett's trans.

the capacity of women for science or art. If you would hear of the limitations of women, go to the average male fool. From him, as perhaps from the average Athenian, you will hear that politics is very difficult and science very abstract, and that the higher branches of art demand a very continuous strain. The average Athenian was, indeed, certain that women were not capable of these; perhaps because he was aware that *he* was not. From him therefore we should hear of the excellencies of life which are reserved for the male sex; but from Plato we learn that "none of the occupations which comprehend the ordering of the community belong to woman as woman nor yet to man as man; but natural gifts are to be found here and there, in both sexes alike; and so far as her nature is concerned the woman is admissible to all pursuits as well as the man; though in all of them the woman is weaker than the man." [1] "There are some women who are fit, and some who are unfit for the office of guardians." And of all guardians we require that "their final task shall be to lift up the eye of the soul, and fix it upon that which gives light to all things." But in this matter, "do not suppose," says Socrates, "that my remarks were intended to apply at all more to men than to women, so long as we can find women whose talents are equal to the situation." [2]

Thus it appears that in the Athenian tradition, in spite of evil practice in the seclusion of women, and in spite of the current and popular judgment expressed by Aristotle, there is to be found an ideal for the human being which is inde-

[1] Republic, 455*b*, 450*a*. Trans. by Davies and Vaughan.
[2] id., 540.

pendent of the distinction between the sexes. It is no small matter, though it may seem obvious to us now, that Plato should claim for women the finest qualities of that common humanity which the prejudices or the uncriticised customs of the world have generally refused to recognise in them. And the claim was made in Athens. Some would say that in this Plato was not Athenian; or it may be urged that women were freer in other cities. Of that we shall speak when we deal with the social position of women in the ideal community. Here we speak only of the individual capacities of women. And in this regard, in recognising the heights of intelligence or emotion of which women are capable, Plato *was* Athenian; for only in Athens was such capacity consciously valued for either men or women. Other Greek cities had had great women. Sappho and Corinna were not forgotten. But it is absurd to say that, because in Sparta women were developed as man-breeders, their highest capabilities were recognised. Sparta valued emotion and intelligence little enough even among its men; it certainly had no use for women intellectually great.

If however we make Athens even in this point stand for all the possibilities of Greece in general, then we must count it not only an Athenian but a Greek ideal that women should rise to great heights. And we must compare the Greek cities not with modern Paris or New York or Los Angeles, but with contemporary Asian or Egyptian towns. Commentators seem to forget that Plato was read in the Greek world, and that his sentiments were probably shared by many who could not express them so well. Indeed Plato himself, although he admits that the idea of women as guardians may seem

strange, makes his characters in the conversation accept it. Adeimantus and Glaucon are not drawn as geniuses; and it is unlikely that Plato would have made his characters admit the cogency of Socrates' arguments if the real men upon whom he modelled his dialogue had been violently opposed to the revolutionary ideas suggested. We should allow, therefore, for the belief in Greece, and in Athens especially, that women are capable of the very highest development.

The conclusion is obvious. The Platonic ideal, in part a repudiation of accepted Greek conceptions, is, in part, based upon the common Greek desire for a higher human development. But even in the effort to draw a figure more splendid than those popularly admired or understood, Plato is Greek. Intelligence he never separates from emotion; and he seeks everywhere for what is human, irrespective of sex distinctions, at that point at which the human becomes in the truest sense divine.

The whole value of Plato's ideal of character, however, would be misrepresented if we did not add one further observation. There is no trace of puritanic or sabbatical solemnity about Plato's ideal man. Wit and the ability to laugh at himself and incidentally at his readers, is perhaps the greatest of all the excellencies of Plato; and some of it is conferred by him upon his vision of the ideal. Even when he is speaking of his "heavenly city" where justice will be found, we have to be on our guard lest we take Plato more seriously than he did himself. And certainly in his drawing of the ideal man, he is inclined to laughter. This is the great distinction between the Platonic and the Aristotelian literature, in spite of Aristotle's occasional efforts

at a joke.[1] But the effect of Plato's wit upon Plato's ideal man is that the emotional intensity of philosophical Eros and the intellectual insight into the Form of the Good are humanised and graced by Socratic humour. Laughter saves the true philosopher; it brings the ascetic down from the pillar and sends him, crowned, to a dinner-party; it lifts the head of the student in him and sets him hob-nobbing with cobblers and bankers. For the fineness of the ideal character, as Plato imagined it, is not contaminated by common life; and the rarer air of the heights only gives one liberty to laugh at the solemn nonsense of the majority of those (probably including himself) who talk about virtue. A certain buoyancy of spirit and lightness of touch upon great subjects, prevents the Platonic ideal from becoming what too many commentators have made it since the Neoplatonists began that evil tradition, a combination of a bishop and a fakir. The ideal man in Plato, with all his enthusiasms and his insight, fortunately remained an Athenian.

[1] Politics, 1310*b*, "A nose which goes too far at last ceases to be a nose at all."

CHAPTER XIV

PLATO ON EDUCATION

EDUCATION is the name we give to the method by which we seek to develop those characteristics which we think admirable in man. It is generally regarded, in fact, by those who undergo it, as a peculiar and inexplicable form of torture. But it is intended kindly, and it is supposed to fulfil a double function—to give to each generation the knowledge and ability for action which has been acquired in the past, and to make each generation capable of increasing such knowledge and ability. For information has to be given without destroying originality; and the new generation must be made able to react to unforeseen issues without being left to go through all the bitter experience of the race. The method we use is indicated by the end we have in view or the end we unconsciously accept as desirable. And so the Greek system may be thought of as the result of an ideal, from which Plato drew his chief inspiration.

In the first place, of the Greeks in general we may say that they valued education more than most races have done. Spartan legislation was based upon an educational system: Athens had innumerable and well-frequented schools; and even small towns like Troezen and Mukalessos in Bœotia had schools.[1] This implies, of course, only an education

[1] *cf.* Freeman, Schools of Hellas, p. 76 *sq.*, and for Plato, see especially Nettleship on "Education in the Republic of Plato," in *Hellenica.*

in reading and writing, in playing the lyre and chanting, and in physical development. Except in Sparta it implies also only an education for boys: since girls were trained as housekeepers at home and seldom acquired any intellectual interests. Thus the system was of very limited value. But, even so, it was more than Europe had for many centuries after Greek civilisation had disappeared.

After the first stages of education, many even of the free-born boys would have to earn a living; but some would be able to begin mathematics and to continue more elaborately their early study of "the poets." This, together with the use of the public gymnasia, may be called secondary education; and it seems to have been common in all Hellas. We must also allow for the military training which followed "secondary" education; and for the highly valued system, of which the Sophists took advantage, by which adults discussed scientific or political subjects which were commonly of interest. In most Greek cities there was an opportunity for the contact of adult minds which is hardly possible now even in our Universities.

The general Greek view of the importance of education is well known. "First among human things," says Antiphon the Sophist, "I reckon education"; and the philosophers only emphasised an admitted truth when they made education the most important element in their ideal societies. For neither Plato nor Aristotle depart, in this point, from the Greek tradition; and although their system of education and, in part, the purpose for which they chiefly intended it are obsolete, the spirit in which they treat the question and the general attitude they adopt are of permanent importance.

We may now turn to Plato's ideal of education. There were many points in which he agreed with other Athenians as to the character of the ideal man, and, therefore, he accepts or takes for granted many of the practices of Athenian education. Thus he makes no comment on the accepted division of method into gymnastic and music, except to point out that gymnastic may be good for the mind as well as for the body,[1] and that the body is affected by the mind.[2] He accepts also the prominent place given to intellectual training in the Athenian ideal. On the other hand, he looks to Sparta rather than to Athens for strictness of her system, since he greatly and wrongly undervalued the Athenian desire for individuality. He made a fetich of organisation; and yet in one point he seems to have correctly criticised the Athenian system. It was too formless, and it left too much to the caprice of parents, who as a class were considered by Plato to be incompetent to judge either the purpose or the method of education. To Plato, and to Aristotle after him, the social effects of education seemed overwhelmingly important, and he therefore considered that the whole of society should direct the education of each child by giving complete power to those who were specialists in education.[3] This is taken for granted both in the *Republic* and in the *Laws*. Education, Plato says in the *Laws*, will never have its right place until the minister for education is superior to the minister for war. Again, he opposed the Athenian idea which cut off women from educa-

[1] Rep., 376 in fine. [2] id., 403. *cf.* Charmides.

[3] It is important that it is *society* and not the *state* (in our modern sense) which is to direct education. Neither Plato nor Aristotle maintain that education should be directed by the state as opposed, for example, to the Church.

tion, and here also he looked to Sparta, adding, however, the very un-Spartan conception of the value of training a woman's intelligence as well as her body. He certainly never imagined that the only purpose for which all women should be trained was the bearing of children ; and he probably knew that the untrained intelligence of the women was one of the causes of the overwhelming supply of fools in each generation.

The purpose of education to the mind of Plato, as can be seen from what has been said above, was to make a man able to influence those with whom he lived and capable of reacting to their influence. In that sense the purpose was social. Thus it is impossible, in Plato's sense, to call a man educated who has no human interests and is not to be stimulated by the fortunes or thoughts of those around him. Education is also to fit a man for a particular task in society. Not enough is generally made in commentaries of the repudiation by Plato of that vague general training which was customary at Athens and in England is called the education of a gentleman. That the whole man should be developed goes without saying ; but the whole man is not conceived to be in his action or his career an "all-round" man. He has one kind of task to perform, and is trained for that task.[1] Specialisation, in our sense, was, of course, unknown in so simple a society ; but already the philosophers were able to view society as a complex of functions

[1] Rep., 443, in fine, "after he has made the elements of his nature into a real unity, he will then proceed to do whatever he may have to do, whether it involve the acquisition of property or attention to the wants of the body, whether it be a social affair or a business transaction of his own." Trans. Davies and Vaughan.

to be performed by differently trained individuals. The process of education is to be at once a gradual discovery of the individual's capacity for this or that definite task and his gradual preparation for that task.[1] It is to be governed by the idea that education is not a putting in of anything but a turning to the light " of that faculty which resides in the soul of each man."[2]

With respect to method, the details do not concern us here, since we are dealing only with the governing conceptions of Plato, and in many of his suggestions he does not depart from the accepted practice of his time. He seems to allow for three stages in education, one in childhood, one in youth and one in adult years. In childhood the attention should be given not to training the mind but to the development of a certain attitude. Education must begin with play and depends for its permanent value on " atmosphere." Fair sights and sweet sounds make the beginnings of human excellence ; for the desire for what is good and beautiful must become natural and must not be merely commanded. When the intelligence is first addressed the crudities of the traditional books must be omitted, for " unlovely fiction must not be told to the young and undiscerning."[3] It is during this period that the first indications are given of the quality of intelligence or spirit in each child.

The education of youth is the time for the separate use of physical and intellectual training. Not only must the body be developed with an eye to beauty

[1] Rep., 423, " each to some one work that each may practise his own occupation."

[2] id., 518.

[3] id., 378. This very important issue in the days of Plato is of subordinate importance to us now.

and suppleness, as all Greeks admitted, but bodily movement must give rhythm and harmony to the mind. For this purpose Plato, in the *Laws*, suggests dancing,[1] although he is against the then newly-introduced dramatic or "programme" dances in which imitation played too large a part. The dance is, of course, a formal group movement. And even in the *Republic*, where less detail is given as to the method of physical education, it is said that athleticism must be avoided, although the bodily training suggested as a substitute is not as clear as it should be for us un-Greek moderns to understand.

The intellectual training suggested by Plato is again, as to its details, not of importance to us here. The fundamental point, however, is that it is what we should now call scientific. Plato, the literary artist, is also the devoted adherent of mathematics. No one has said more clearly than he that this is the basis of all intellectual training; and he gives us quite clearly to understand that "scientific" knowledge is not a memory for various fragments of information but a grasp of principles. Upon that grounding is based the study of the world of nature and of man. Skill in expression, so highly valued by the Athenians, is looked at askance by Plato; and the study of forms of speech is expressly repudiated. Memory was of more importance then than it is in an age of books; and yet Plato never loses sight of the supreme importance of individual ability to reason. Examinations had happily not yet been discovered in Europe; but the inspiration of each by the tradition of civilised society was believed to be shown in his actions or ambitions.

As for science, it is to be studied not because it is

[1] Laws, 795*e*.

useful in trade or for any so-called practical end, but chiefly because by it "the mind is led to look upwards."[1] Science is to train the capacity for thinking. During the years from twenty to thirty in an ideal community the best are pursuing this in all its different branches. And the result of a trained general capacity for thinking is believed by Plato to be a better type of specialised work; but, of course, better in this sense means morally or "humanly" better and not merely better as a source of wealth.

Along with training in exact sciences must go the influence or teaching of "the poets." For, as we have seen above, moral training is necessary as well as intellectual; and a man does not learn what it is right to do by accident or by intuition.

This is, perhaps the place to speak of Plato's conception of the place of art in life. All Greeks agreed that art, and especially drama, had as its social function some task which might be called educative. But Plato turns aside from the general and positive statement to a violent attack upon the practices of his own day. His mistake is fairly obvious, as is his general mistake in undervaluing individuality and the danger which is the only test of moral strength. But in this he is right:—as music must be simple and not imitative of objects, as myths must be moral, so drama must be such as will make us true to what is best in us.[2] Any form of art

[1] Rep., 529*a*. This is a most "practical" end; but the use of English confines practice to the getting of money. We may therefore call the Platonic ideal unpractical or at least not "technical" and utilitarian. The truths taught are, however, immensely important to Plato, and he never regards science as a mere gymnastic.

[2] This does not mean that Plato was attacking art. He was attacking the art-pose and the sentimentalism of the day.

which sinks that which is best in the exciting of that which is primitive and, therefore, commonest, is hopelessly bad—not only bad for moral reasons but bad art. The principle is perhaps doubtful; but Plato's general argument seems to hold, even though his application of the principle is wrong. He exaggerated the value of what was old and already established in art, and if he had done the same as to science his own works would stand condemned: but even if we deny that what is old is best, we may still admit that the highest function of art is to express and to excite in us what is best.[1]

In all this we have been considering the training into further and further excellence of an always lessening number. For the higher abilities are less common. Finally, no unimportant part of education comes after the years during which the general and fundamental abilities for life are acquired. Adult education may in a sense be for every one; but in that sense education is not a system but is simply derived from the hard blows of experience. As a system adult education must be reserved for a few, since the majority are either incapable of going beyond the simplest truths and the most elementary development or they are prevented by their social occupations. Thus Plato never considers an adult education which is merely an attempt to make up for the deficiencies of the education endured in earlier years. Ideally a system of adult education is a system for training special abilities; and because it is such, Plato seems to be hostile to the general and formless appetite for discussion in

[1] There is an element of badinage in Plato's attack on art which is completely missed by those who do not see that he himself was quite consciously an artist. *cf.* also *Laws*, 719., and *Gorgias*, 502. I owe this suggestion to my friend, Mr. G. P. Monarty.

Athens. Those who pursue this highest part of education in an ideal society would be from thirty to thirty-five years old,[1] and specially capable. For among them are to be found the ideal men and women of society. Here, at least, Plato does not undervalue individuality. He is indeed in his system of education searching for those who are to be "the spiritual power"; and so carried away is he by this idea that he seems often, though unintentionally, to forget the common man.[2] The chief subject for this period of education is the knowledge of social facts and social laws. This, too, must be acquired by hard application, and is always accompanied by exact mathematical studies. It must by no means be a mere discovery of what people want or how people may be flattered. For it is to lead to a discovery of what is universally right and of the best social means of attaining it. In its widest sense it may be called dialectic; and this name, in spite of its later evil associations, we may still keep, in order to prevent ourselves thinking that Plato means a vague and unsystematised dilettantism, which is sometimes called the study of social life. The highest purpose of education, then, is the formation of a spiritual power in society, and this power must be exactly and intelligently trained, with a view to its importance for the real life of all human beings. For the spiritual power exists only that it may serve the community. It leads to that never-ending pursuit of the fleeting image of the Good which, as we have seen above, is the highest element in the life of the ideal man.

[1] Rep., 539*d*.

[2] He corrects himself often, remembering the charges against "the few." (Rep., 500.)

Thus, if we subordinate as we should the discussion of Homer and the dramatists in the *Republic* and the sometimes tiresome regulations in the *Laws*, the Platonic ideal of education is seen to be of no small value to us now. In the confusion of suggested programmes it may be as well to receive from one who at least at moments did see the fleeting image of the Good, the conception of an education which may not only preserve what is best in tradition but give to all who are capable those visions by which the future is made better than the past.

CHAPTER XV

PLATO ON THE IDEAL SOCIETY

As a preliminary we assume that Plato does not speak of the state or of politics in our sense of the words. This will be obvious to scholars ; but its importance is not very commonly recognised. The *polis*, as we have seen, was in fact a union in the main religious, having within it all those different activities which we find in church, state, university, club and theatre,—all as functions of one organisation. Plato in speaking of the ideal does not suggest a new form of society but a reform of the *polis*. The lines within which his idealisation was to work were, therefore, strictly defined by circumstance and tradition. He never dreams of a nation-state or of the conflict of church and state or of an international finance or of scientific international unions. We should have to be very careful, therefore, if we were to apply any of Plato's idealisation of the *polis* to the very different social circumstances in which we now live. And it would be absurd to make Plato into an advocate of state-absolutism or state-education in *our* sense of the word state. For him, as for later philosophers who have less excuse than he had, there is no question of the conflict of institutions ; for the only other possibility besides devotion to the ideal *polis* was, to his mind, egoism or a barren individual selfishness. It may have been so,

although in this he seems to have been mistaken, but it certainly is not so now; for there are many institutions to which a modern man may be bound besides what we call a state. We must understand the subject of the *Republic* and the *Laws*, therefore, to be, not what we call a state, but more nearly what we call society, meaning by that word *all* the social relations of man.

Again, by necessity society appeared to the Greeks as a complete organism in the midst of a surrounding vacuum or chaos. Hence Plato, mistakenly, omits all definite reference to those men who presumably do *not* belong to his ideal society.[1] This might be correct if the ideal society included all men, but by the organisation of the Republic, particularly for war, we are given to understand that there are other men outside. Their organisation and purposes should not have been disregarded, for the isolated *polis* was pure fiction.

This does not imply that Plato's ideal is entirely inapplicable to our circumstances. His social ideal is certainly less so than the ideal for the individual man; because social structure has changed more in the interval than has individual character. But in his most general statements as to the nature of society and the methods for improving it, Plato has not been made obsolete by the changes which have occurred since he wrote. Society must still be conceived in terms of individuals performing functions or of functions for which individual abilities are needed. A good society is still one in which

[1] Aristotle corrects the isolation of the Platonic ideal in the *Laws* (Pol. 1265*a*, 7), but only because he thinks *war* is the chief contact. I do not mean to imply that Plato entirely forgot the existence of "foreign" states. The point is that he never definitely considered what they would be like and how related.

all the parts are co-ordinated. Education is still of fundamental importance. And the ultimate end to which we look must still be understood in the terms of morality rather than wealth or power.

Again, in order to do justice to Plato's ideal for society, it is necessary to remember the particular evils which seemed to him to be most striking. He does, indeed, speak in general terms of the nature of society as a whole, and of dangers to social life which arise from the nature of man. But the greatest thinker cannot fail to be affected by the particular circumstances of his life, and not even Plato could be, except at rare moments, the spectator of all time and all existence. Therefore, quite apart from the limitations we have already described, we must consider the particular issues which Plato had most in mind when he was stating his ideal.

The evils in Athens impressed him more than those in Sparta; and this was partly because he lived in Athens and not in Sparta. But it was also because he lived in a period of political confusion in Athens that organisation seemed to be the highest need. He saw that amateur politics and amateur law-making were then the greatest evil; and he did not quite appreciate the equal evil of specialism, because there was no specialism in Athenian government. Again he belonged to the old Aristocracy and to a philosophical-religious group whose master had been condemned by the democracy. He saw, therefore, the evils due to the action of common folk more clearly than those of which his own social class was the cause.

The evils most hated by him were selfishness and incompetence. Private greed seemed to him to weaken society and official incompetence to render all

common action futile. He thought that Athens especially suffered thus; and we need not suppose that he was wrong. But many other evils, from which the ideal society is the suggested refuge, he did not see; and it is at least arguable that, even if we could make selfishness and incompetence less frequent or less powerful in society, we should still be a long way from the ideal. For Plato never really discusses the social evils which are not due to *moral* causes; over-population in respect to food conditions,[1] too rigid an organisation, disease or famine—all these may have in some sense moral connections but they cannot be removed merely by making men virtuous.

When these limitations are granted, the work of Plato is seen to be not less great because of them. He rises to a height unsurpassed so far in the conception of a true society, which shall realise what men have hoped for ever since they aimed at more than food or clothing. The comparatively inadequate evidence he had before him did not hinder his insight into the binding force of society or the immense development of it which might be possible. Behind or beneath all his ideals is a very clear analysis of actual social experience which, however limited, had in it all the essential elements of any social life. That is what makes Plato still the most suggestive of all writers on social theory.

This, then, is Plato's initial assumption. We cannot discuss what can be made of society unless we know at least some of the essential facts of social life. But the description of what is normally done must not be taken necessarily as evidence for

[1] *cf.* Aristotle, *Politics*, 1265*b*. On limiting population—a criticism of Plato.

what ought to be done. In actual fact the structure of society was then due to the exploitation of some by others. It is still so; and the majority, now as then, not only acquiesce but support this kind of organisation, probably because no other possibility has entered their heads, or because the alternative seems to them to be chaos. For that reason it is well said that the state rests upon indolence and docility. In the Greek world it was usual to think of the exploiters as criminal (tyrants or oligarchs). But Plato's statement of facts would not be incorrect if we removed the accusation of crime entirely; for the few who are able to live a humane and civilised life in view of the established organisation of society are not villains. It is simply a deficient and largely unconscious social tradition which gives them their position. We may, however, assume with Plato that some who are not among the few may be capable of living such a life, and that not all of those few are capable; since the few have not been selected by any test of individual capacity for superior development, and the social structure provides no opportunity for the many to show what they can do.

Even this actual society, however, holds together and lives, in proportion as those who do this or that are competent to do it; and in proportion as the aim of the individual acting is not altogether private advantage. Although selfishness and incompetence exist, yet society holds together because there is also a certain amount of effective action having good social results. Or to put it in a less Platonic but more modern way, society holds together because it is so organised that good social results follow from certain actions which are commonly

done, whatever the motive of the doer may be. A merchant may intend to serve only his own interest, but if he is a competent merchant his action has effects which are good for great numbers of his fellow men.

What then is the ideal society? In general terms, it is one in which every member does that for which he is best fitted, with a view to its social results. In the process of education individual competence is discovered; and the system of education is to allow of this special competence being developed. Each individual is to perform one special function in the organic whole which is society; and the organisation of society is to be nothing but the providing of opportunities for each to perform the function for which he is best fitted. The ideal society is a real whole. It is not a mere congeries of atomic individuals. As the blood in a man's veins is the blood of his race, so the thought and emotion of a man are the thought and emotion of the community. And the tone, so to call it, of the social idea in Plato is fundamentally religious, as the life of Athens was a unity more obviously in the religious than in the political sense. The full life of the community, giving an opportunity for the greatest enthusiasm and the keenest insight, is the chief interest of Plato; not only the mechanism of law and administration.

So much in general; the further detail in Plato's suggestions must be discussed in reference to the two entirely different works, the *Republic* and the *Laws*. In each there is the expression of a social ideal; but in the *Republic* the ideal seems to be both higher and more indefinite, whereas in the *Laws* the ideal is almost as definite and as ephemeral

in importance as a political programme. But there are two still more fundamental distinctions between the two books. First, the *Republic* is really as much a study of social psychology as a Utopia, and, secondly, in the *Republic* the chief interest of the author is in social sentiments rather than in the institutions which may be their embodiment.

As to the first point, the *Republic* is obviously not a Utopia in the same sense as Sir Thomas More's work or that of Bacon or of Campanella. It is not a programme for action; nor does it pretend to be a description of an actual city which could exist on earth. In short it is in the main not an ideal in the sense of what ought to be done. It is a study of the necessary general conditions upon which *all* social life is based. The meaning of it, put abruptly, seems to be this:—These are the common features of every society in so far as it is really a society, and not a mere collection of units. Or we may put the thesis in this way:—If you want to know what makes Athens or Sparta a real *polis*,—each, we say, is a *polis* in so far as it has (1) a common end, and (2) ability to attain that end. Hence comes Plato's continual reminder that it does not matter whether such a city as Socrates describes could exist—as if he should say, it makes no difference to the truth that these are the essential features of social life if these features cannot be found without other non-essential details. Hence also the parallel with individual psychology. Plato does not say of the individual, "This is what he ought to be"—but "In so far as he is a real man this is what he *is*," viz., a harmony of different activities in view of a common purpose. And in so

far as what is here spoken of is not an ideal individual but the elements of all individuality, so what is spoken of in regard to society is not an ideal society but the essential elements of any society. In the *Laws*, by contrast, there is no parallel with individual psychology, nor any statement of habits upon which social unity is based. But the plan of what is to be done is more definite and detailed, and the conditions of Greek city life (slavery, for example) are given more prominence.

Secondly, in the *Republic* the emphasis is laid upon the sentiment or loyalty of the members of a society. It is mutual service and the desire of each for all which is the bond, and gives its form to the *polis*.[1] In the *Laws* regulations are scrupulously laid down and every member of society seems to be doing what some other member has decided he ought to do, a situation which is often called "organisation." So Aristotle says, contrasting the *Laws* with the *Republic*, "In the *Laws* there is hardly anything but laws; not much is said about the constitution."[2] The conception of a common spirit as the binding force of society has given place somewhat to the idea of regulation; but even here, of course, it is the Greek and not our conception of law which is prominent.

As regards the social ideal there is, of course, an element of Utopia in the *Republic*. It is not altogether a treatise on social psychology. And the two interests, one of fact and one of moral ideal, are interwoven; or it may be that the two issues were

[1] The training of the members is the real security for all. "Regulations in an ill-organised community are useless and in a well-organised community they come spontaneously." Rep., 427.

[2] Politics, 1265*a*, 1.

not distinct in Plato's mind. For there is a very intimate connection between (1) the general features of any genuine society and (2) the plan we should adopt for curing social evils. No such plan is of value unless it is based on a knowledge of social facts, and yet no social psychology is more than an academic impertinence if it implies no suggestion as to the cure of evils. This very interweaving of the two interests is one of the best reasons which can be given for the immortal freshness of the *Republic*.

But it may be disappointing to those who are accustomed to more modern Utopias to hear nothing of the dress and food in Plato's ideal society. The health of its members is less evident than in Morris's "Nowhere," and the absence of machinery and a scientific training is perhaps alarming. If this be thought a deficiency, it must be remembered that Plato believed the civilisation of men to depend less upon the number of their opportunities than upon the use made of them. The Platonic Utopia is, therefore, not a description of circumstances but an exposition of social sentiment. The point at which social psychology becomes a plan of social reform is precisely here; for all existing society gives a hint of what is aimed at and never quite reached. If these hints are carried to their legitimate conclusion we should have the *real* society, of which all existing societies are inadequate copies; and this *real* society (*i.e.*, a society which *is* a society) is the ideal.

The general features of all society are thus described. Functions of three kinds have to be performed: supply, administration and guidance. That is to say, men living together in a real society require

(1) food and clothing, (2) order and security, and (3) intelligent prevision of means and ends. Each man requires all three, because each man has body and soul and spirit or mind; but the three needs in a real society are not supplied by each man for himself. Hence there are three "classes" of men in society, the function of each class being the supply of one of the three needs of all men. For the existence of a society all three functions are equally necessary; but for the excellence of a society one function may be more valuable than another; or to put the same idea in another form—men differ in ability, not so much in that one is superior to the other, but in that one is best able to do one thing and another another. If what one man is able to do is more valuable to society than what another is able to do, then the first man is superior to the second. And value to society may be calculated in two ways; either what is supplied is fundamental to all society, or it is essential to a particular kind of society. Thus physical labour for food-supply is more fundamental to all society than musical ability, because no one who is without food can listen to music; but musical ability is as essential as labour for supply in a highly civilised society, because without it we lack a certain quality of life.

Of the three social functions only one is discussed in detail in the *Republic*, the supply of ideas which comes from the "spiritual power" in society. The warriors or administrators are dealt with by implication, since they are either part of the class called guardians or they are in very close relation to that section of society which is concerned with the production of ideas. Of the guardians strictly so called

we may say that they are the most important class, for on their character and activity depends the quality of society. They are described as philosophers; and Plato declares that the evil in society is only cured in so far as the rulers are philosophers and the philosophers are rulers. We must remember the meaning of the word philosopher; for the guardians are the ideal men and women of whom we have spoken above, but now in their social relations. Plato never imagined, as some commentators seem to imply, that all would be well if we gave Government offices to the members of the Oxford Philosophical Society or induced permanent heads of departments to take the Moral Sciences Tripos. He was speaking of what the Middle Ages and the Comtists called "the spiritual power" in society.

Their education having been fully explained, Plato defines their position and function as follows. They are primarily a source of law. The Greek conception of law, as flexible and personal, we have already described: and here it is only necessary to point out how in the *Republic* the source of good in society is supposed to be personal and not impersonal. The ennobling influence of persons rather than the excellence of regulations is, for Plato, the source of good in society. The guardians, or rather outpost-men, of society are not simply to keep off evil but to gather and to diffuse the good about them. To make them into arbitrary tyrants, ruling unwilling others for the good of these others, is to misrepresent Plato, for there is no feeling of constraint in the *Republic*: and indeed when there is any mention of control, it is precisely the guardians whom Plato is most anxious to control. But even these are to be controlled by education, not by police;

and where enactments are spoken of, they are much more in the spirit of a monastic rule than of a civil law. So far are we moderns from appreciating this Greek idea of control that we do not really understand the force of a monastic rule, much less that of a Greek law. It seems to us like a miserable subjection. But we have to re-read the mediæval thinkers in order to understand their conceptions of the Rule. We have to jog our slow imagination in order to feel Socrates' language about the Laws as more than a pretty metaphor.

Secondly the guardians are trained "statesmen." There is here, as in the meaning of the word *polis*, a wider implication than is in our word which refers to the institution for law and government. A statesman, in Plato's sense, is not concerned only with what we call politics. The pettifogging politician is contrasted with the true philosopher; but the true statesman is he who, even in a private position, knows "the royal science."[1] The conception of trained statesmanship and of the high moral character necessary for public activities is to be found in a treatise of the Sophist Antiphon.[2] It is indeed only the legitimate result of the Greek love of knowledge combined with the Greek interest in society. But Plato makes his guardians know more than how to manage men. They have the best scientific knowledge of the day, and most of all, they know what is good for the society of which they are a part. They are therefore primarily educators, in the larger sense of the word; not as givers of instruction but as contrivers of the development of the members of the *polis*, since the knowledge by each of his need for all increases, so the bond of society is more

[1] Statesman, 259.

[2] Saupe, Frag. Orat. Graec.

excellent. The conception of statesmanship as education and of the true philosopher-statesman as an educator connects with the Platonic, and indeed the Athenian, view of law. For law is not command but the reason in things. And as in true education those who learn do not discover the opinion of the teacher but the truth, so in society the bond is not the expression of will but the nature of things.

Again, the guardians are both male and female. Capable women are selected by the same process and for the same social services as capable men. The property of all guardians is common, lest any should aim at his own advantage: and the guardian class, more than any other, is to have not its own advantage but that of all society in view. For this reason they are to sacrifice the dearest prejudice of Greek individualism, the segregate family with its enclosed women. No suggestion of Plato's has been more absurdly misunderstood; and Plato knew that the suggestion would seem ludicrous.[1] The comic situation which might result from the destruction of the Athenian family was expounded with great glee by Aristophanes, as soon as the fifth book of the *Republic* had been published, in his *Ecclesiazousai*.[2] There we find it said that the result would be complete communism in goods, for all would be maintained by the state, and that there would be complete freedom of intercourse between the sexes except that special laws would prevent the ugly or the deformed from not having a fair chance. No one would know who his father was. In what follows

[1] Rep., 452. "Let me ask those witty men to try to be serious and remember that customs change."

[2] From line 590.

during the action of the play the most pointed situation, as against what is vulgarly called " the community of women," is in the legal compulsion of a youth to leave the girl of his choice and satisfy the claims of some old hags.[1] The treatment of Plato's suggestion by the majority of commentators has been in the manner of Aristophanes without the wit or picturesqueness. A dull and gloomy puritanism, combined, as it generally is, with a secret prurience, has first misinterpreted and then condemned the " free love " of the *Republic*. We need not trouble to defend Plato; for the best defence is to be found in an understanding of what he says, if that can be had without the admixture of apologetic or abusive commentary. First, it is only among the guardians (the spiritual power) and not in society at large that the " pull " of family loyalties must be destroyed. Secondly, the purpose is to achieve complete social devotion without the obligation to celibacy. Of the two plans for obtaining complete social service Plato's was more reasonable than that of Pope Gregory VII, who enforced celibacy for the first time among the Roman clergy.[2] But in modern times it is believed that social devotion can be had without either enforced celibacy or the " common " family of Plato. If it can, that is due to a fact upon which Plato could not reckon, the nature of the modern family. Hence thirdly, Plato suggests not the destruction of the family in general, for of that he did not speak, but the destruction of the Greek family especially as it was found in Athens. The destruction has actually taken place, and com-

[1] Ecclesiazousai, 884 *sq.*

[2] *cf.* Lea's *History of Sacerdotal Celibacy*, for the results of the un-Platonic plan.

mentators still abuse Plato! For we are enslaved by words. What Plato suggested was that women should not be regarded as property; and he is made in translation and in notes to say only that they should be common property instead of private property! More moderns indeed are shocked by the idea that women should not be *private* property than are shocked by the idea that they should be common property: for the English law and almost universal custom still implies that married women are "owned." But as a matter of fact Plato suggests that they shall not be regarded as property at all; that is to say the female guardians shall have precisely the same social standing as the male. This is the intention of all the Socratic discussion about what is usually called "the community of women," and Aristophanes knew perfectly well that Plato was not proposing a general promiscuity. But even in the Platonic discussion the element of humour is not absent, and we must be on our guard in reading his discussion of women's rights to distinguish his real intention from the play of his fancy. So much with respect to the falsely so-called "community" of women.

It is often said that Plato dislikes liberty; and the conception of guardians (a directive spiritual power) is referred to as a proof of this.[1] But he, like all Athenians, knew that the only good rule is a rule over those who *voluntarily* accept it;[2] for even in the *Laws*, which is much more full of regulations than the *Republic*, he compares his law

[1] *cf.* Livingstone, Greek Genius, p. 186 *sq.* The author seems to me to misunderstand the Platonic view of the distinction between right and wrong.

[2] Statesman 276. Real politics as opposed to tyranny is defined by reference to the *voluntary*.

to the advice of a doctor to a free man, which creates good will, by contrast with the commands of a slave doctor ; [1] and again he says that " laws are framed partly for good men to instruct them how they may live on friendly terms with one another, and partly for the sake of those who refuse to be instructed, whose spirit cannot be hindered from doing all evil." [2] The restrictive purpose of law is therefore quite subordinate; and in the *Republic* sentiment is much more emphasised than regulation : " Everyone should be governed by a power in his own heart, the only alternative being to impose it from without. . . . Law only withholds freedom until it has established a guardian in the heart,—from which time men are free." [3]

But Plato certainly does believe that it is more important that men should do what *is* right than that they should do what they like or even what they *think* right. And although he reminds us often that the ideal is that men should like to do what it is right to do, he is perhaps too careless of their likes and dislikes. Freedom to act as you like is only good if it results in your acting rightly, and for this reason Plato is summary with liberty. But one suspects that what really offends those who criticise Plato on this point is the assumption that the guardians can know what is absolutely right. There is a political subjectivism which implies that we can never know what is right or that the will of any given community is right ; and this is imagined to be the real defence of liberty. This certainly is opposed by Plato. Perhaps he thinks that what is right can be discovered more easily than it can in fact ; perhaps he is too certain that one man can

[1] Laws, 723. [2] id.,, 880. [3] Rep., 590 *sq.*

know it for another.[1] But surely his view is correct when he says that the highest aim of society should be not the will of its members but justice, and that liberty itself is only a means by which right action may be done.

So far we have spoken chiefly of the *Republic*. With respect to the *Laws* our subject here does not require a detailed treatment: for the ideal in this book is a concession to circumstances which no longer exist. The Greek family and chattel slavery again appear. Private property, especially in land, is restricted;[2] and the social classes are less divided than in the *Republic*.[3] But there are interesting developments. The ideal state is governed much more by the idea of peace, by contrast to the "mobilisation" in the Republic. The legislator, it is said, should have three things in view, that the state should be free, at unity with itself and possessed of understanding. "The principle for dealing between man and man,"

[1] It is a mistake to suppose that Plato's suggestion as to philosopher kings has been tried and has failed. Some historians have imagined that M. Aurelius Antoninus was an instance in point. But this is to misunderstand Plato. There are two fundamental elements in Plato's suggestion,—one, that the philosopher king shall *know* what to do, and not to be merely well-intentioned; and, the other, that he shall have power and ability for creative legislation and not be merely scrupulous as an official in carrying out existing laws. In neither sense is Marcus an example. He was not a constructive thinker and never claimed that he was: he was scrupulous in duty but not a great inventor of institutions. To make the best of existing institutions is entirely different from devising new institutions. But the philosopher king is essentially a lawgiver, a creative source of new social life, not a point of permanence and certainly not an official.

[2] Laws, V. 734 E. *cf.* Aristotle's excellent criticism: "It is not the possessions but the desires of mankind which require to be equalised, and this is impossible, unless a sufficient education is provided by society." Pol. 1266*b*. 8.

[3] Id., V. 744 E.

says Plato, "is very simple; Thou shalt not touch that which is mine . . . without my consent, and may I, being of sound mind, do to others as I would that they should do to me." [1] And the regulation of marriages is again explained:—"Let there be one word concerning all marriages. Every man should follow not after the marriage that is most pleasing to himself but after that which is most beneficial to society." [2] The position of women is again emphasised:—"Nothing can be more absurd than the practice which prevails in our own country (Athens) of men and women not following the same pursuits with all their strength and with one mind; for thus society instead of being a whole and as much again, is reduced to a half and yet has the same imposts to pay and the same toils to undergo." [3] We should not forget also that, in spite of all the concessions to special circumstances, Plato in the *Laws* still looks chiefly to the ideal life, which is certainly not a devotion to the attainment of wealth and power. What, he asks, will the members of so organised a society do? They will *live*, he answers, "for night and day are not long enough for the accomplishment of their perfection and consummation." [4] The *Laws* also contain that subtle sentence—"The deeds a man does are not worth great enthusiasm, and yet we must do them with all our heart," [5] in which we may see the strange union of aloofness and human feeling which is characteristic of Socrates and Plato.

The result with respect to old controversies as

[1] Laws, XI., 913.

[2] Id., 773. Men are to marry between 30 and 35. Divorce for incompatibility of temper is to be allowed by a committee of ten men and ten women.

[3] Id., 805. Jowett's trans. [4] Id., 807. [5] Id., 803e.

to the individual and society may be stated in this way. The unit from which Plato starts is not the individual but society; and the individual to him becomes a society rather than society an individual.[1] We, on the other hand, are so obsessed with individualism that in order to realise what society is we have to imagine it, quite falsely, to be an individual. And as an ideal the social whole is more in Plato's mind than what we call the liberty of individuals. But this does not mean that Plato knew the theories of modern "voluntaryism" and put them aside; he was indeed unaware of what modern social theorists would call the individual.[2] But we must recognise that Plato was speaking with the evidence before him of a time when the more complex modern individualism had not yet appeared; and one of the effects of social development has been a higher estimation of spontaneity or originality in modern times. Not that the amount of genius or of the products of genius is greater; but there is more independence, at least in some countries, than there was in Greece. Even in Plato's absolutist conclusions, however, individuality is not supposed to be absorbed by a super-personal society or state, as it is in the Hegelians and at times even in Rousseau.

Plato certainly speaks as though the individual were entirely dependent upon society; and as though all his actions should be considered in their

[1] That is to say the man is described as a complex of functions in harmony. (Rep., 443.) When the crowd-mind is given a super-personality that is the last absurdity of an obsolete individualism.

[2] I do not mean, of course, that he had no experience of egoism. Alcibiades was an obvious example of that kind of individualism. But I mean by individualism not egoism, but the theory and practice of spontaneity.

social effects. There is no appeal beyond the community *in an ideal community*. But the disciple of Socrates can hardly be imagined as maintaining that there is no appeal against any *existing* institution, political or religious. There are times when the good man has to stand aside if his state acts unjustly; there are times when he may be put to death for disagreeing with the established view. Never for a moment does Plato imagine that the vote of the majority or the command of an established government are tests of truth or justice.

But the actual governments of the world are judged by reference to an ideal community of which individual insight makes us aware. A word must therefore be said as to the relation of this ideal society to the actual communities of men. In the *Laws* the commonplace relation of a plan of reform to an established system is the only issue. The ideal is in this sense merely a mark of the general direction which reform should take; and this being naturally conceived in the terms of the Greek *polis*, the *Laws* have but little bearing upon modern circumstances. But in the *Republic* the relation of the ideal to actual society is more subtle. For, in the first place, the ideal is stated to be unpractical or in some sense not realisable in the world of space and time. That is to say it is the soul of society rather than its actual form. It is not because men will never be perfect guardians or never give women equality that the social conceptions of the *Republic* are said by Plato to be independent of their possible realisation in fact. It is because he is not thinking in the main of a plan or programme, but of a new spirit; since on the one hand he says that the

society of which he has been speaking is to be found only in heaven, and on the other that the good man lives in that society all his life.[1] The relation of the ideal in this sense to the actual society of any time is the relation of the standard of moral judgment to the acts of men. It is to this society that the good man appeals when he repudiates or hesitates to give his allegiance to this or that actual institution. To the majority who do not know of that ideal society the refusal of complete subservience to an actual church or state seems to be an insolent egoism. Nevertheless the good man, in Plato's conception, has not appealed to what is foolishly called private judgment, but to a judgment no less social in a society to which the majority are blind. Here is the splendid source of those still undervalued conceptions of the City of God and the Communion of Saints. To those last sentences of the ninth book of the *Republic* we may look as the only safe foundation for allegiance and for criticism. For nothing is more false than to make Socrates and Plato maintainers of the absolute right of any actual state or church. The extent of their allegiance may have been great—it was not in fact—but there never was any doubt of the supremacy of that other allegiance to the ideal society which is sometimes in conflict with the state in which the body of the good man dwells. And the commentators are indeed mistaken who have supposed, because there is no appeal outside or above "the city of God," that Socrates would therefore maintain established governments at all costs. What has confused them is that to Plato's mind the contrast is not between social allegiance

[1] Rep. IX. in fine.

and individualism but between two different kinds of society. For very few in our time know that city in which the good man dwells all his life.

Obviously this is a hint of myth, and Platonic myth is too subtle for us to deal with it here; but the sense, crudely stated, is that there is a standard for judging the action of any society.[1] The only other possible view is that which is connected with Protagoras in the *Theaetetus*.[2] "In politics the followers of Protagoras affirm that right and wrong, honourable and disgraceful, holy and unholy are in reality to each state such as the state thinks and makes lawful and that in determining these matters no individual or state is wiser than another. . . . When they speak of justice and injustice, piety and impiety, they are confident that these have no natural or essential basis—the truth is that which is agreed on at the time of the agreement and as long as the agreement lasts; and this is the philosophy of the many, who do not altogether agree with Protagoras." Again "they maintain that the ordinances which the state commanded and thought just were just to the state which imposed them, while they were in force."[3] The opposition of Socrates and Plato and even of Aristotle to this form of political pragmatism is absolutely unconditional. The idea that no moral criterion exists independently of and above the decision of any actual state or community is disproved by Socrates in the *Theaetetus* when he suggests that no one admits this in questions of expediency. If a state

[1] We may take it that the action of a state or of a society means the action of definite human beings either in their quality as members or as agents of the state or society.

[2] 172*a*, *sq*. Jowett's trans.

[3] Theaetetus, 177 in fine.

decides that slavery has good results, it hardly follows that slavery therefore has good results for that state. No one denies the possibility of exact knowledge of independent (objective) facts in the matter of expediency. And if the knowledge of what is good, or of justice, seems not to be a knowledge of objective fact, that is only because the majority have no very clear idea of the meaning of good.

But if there is a good which is quite independent of the wish or will of one or of many, the knowledge of that good must be the most valuable asset in the resources of society; and those who know or who are most capable of knowing that good are the most valuable members of society. That these should bring that good into being in the world of space and time is more important than liberty, which is the means of realising it, or order, which is its simplest condition. For thus, and thus only, is the actual state or community transformed into the image of that heavenly city where justice always abides.

CHAPTER XVI

ARISTOTLE'S IDEALS

THE arguments and conclusions of Aristotle often imply that we may take for granted the work done by Plato. For if we are to refer not to the actual mention of the name of Plato in the *Ethics* or *Politics* but to the attitude adopted towards life in these two works, Aristotle agrees with Plato more often than he criticises him. And where they do not agree, Aristotle is more typically Greek than Plato. This is not a compliment, for it implies that wherever Plato had the insight or the courage to think to an end, Aristotle harks back to the safe shelter of popular agreement. He is perhaps for that very reason more valuable historically for giving us evidence of the general moral atmosphere; since in Ethics, if not also in general philosophy, Aristotle is a non-Athenian who has acquired in Athens what men like Plato could take for granted.

But if Aristotle has a more typically Greek ideal of life, he is certainly less acute an exponent of morality than Plato. His excellence is rather in analysis and observation than in new and revolutionary hypotheses. Indeed if Homer may be said to nod, Aristotle must be confessed to sleep soundly through several chapters of the *Ethics*; unless by any chance it is moral philosophy to copy out several times in a fair round-hand the statement that

the pen is mightier than the sword and other such wheezy and wrinkled truths. As one reads "the philosopher" sometimes one imagines him platitudinising after a large lunch which he had given to his aged medical relatives from Stageira, who had come to see how the young man was getting on. Sometimes even in his *Politics*, a much greater work than the *Ethics*, one imagines him attempting to be impressive, with a very unphilosophical result upon anyone less reverent than a commentator. It is a pity that Aristophanes could not have remarked upon Aristotle as he did upon Socrates and Plato.

Such criticism must not, however, be taken to imply any undervaluing of Aristotle's work. Irreverence is a protection not from the platitudes of the master but from the repetitions of his commentators. And if we seem to find Polonius among the Aristotelians, we do not therefore deny that what he says is true. It may be that there is some virtue which is "in the mean": it may be that some kind of "good life" is promoted by the state. It may even be "possible for men of moderate means to act as they ought," as we read in the *Ethics*.[1] We do not deny what Polonius says. Again, it is only with respect to his statement of ideals that we are speaking of Aristotle here. In the analysis of fact and perhaps also in the range of knowledge his works are superior to Plato's: and there is no denying the justice of the mediæval estimate of Aristotle as pre-eminently the master. Our debt is so great to him, both in method and in matter, that it seems ungracious to refuse him the first place among the exponents of the ideal. But undeniably the works which have come down to us are very limited in value

[1] 1179*a*.

in this respect. The heroic or the splendid in character is not to be found there; and the fairest vision of society they have to show is too painfully like the mechanical republics of recent years.

The first and perhaps the most valuable expression of the ideal in Aristotle is to be found in the insistence upon *positive action*. The Greeks had always expected a certain spontaneity as characteristic of good life. But in all primitive stages of development, and even in Athens of the fifth century, the accepted view of the good life seems to imply that it is essentially successful avoidance. Taboo is the first guide to morality: and the primitive mind is far more certain of what must *not* be done than of anything that must be done. This survives even into civilised times in the conception of a *moral law*, since law in this sense means not only command but also negative command. Early civil law is always the statement of what must *not* be done; and philosophers, not Greek, have often foolishly supposed that this is the nature of things. But there is no reason why civil law should be conceived as a command, still less as a negative command; for the whole atmosphere is primitive, in which what is not to be done appears so vastly important.

The Greeks, like other people, had their taboo. They had their negative command in morality, and they had those among them who would think that the good man was the man who had successfully avoided evil-doing. There were various members of the "old school" to whom vice appeared as attractive; since this illusion always accompanies a primitive morality: and to them the chief moral need would seem to be to keep men from doing what they wanted to do.

But the whole trend of Greek, and especially of Athenian, thought was against the connecting of the good life with negatives, since even when the Greek thought of law as a basis for morality, he meant by law what we mean when we speak of " natural law " (the rule followed generally) and not what we mean by civil or moral law. For, certainly, the conception of law as *command of a superior* is not a part of Greek morality. And the result is that the goodness of the good man seemed to them to be part of himself and not something which has an origin outside him. Virtue or excellence was essentially spontaneous or natural.

This tendency to think of the good man in terms of life and not of law is taken up and developed by the philosophers. It is implied in Plato's conception of virtue. But it is made explicit by Aristotle, especially in the *Ethics*. Hence we have in Aristotle the famous definition of good as " an energising of the soul in excellence during a full life." [1] And the emphasis on energy is many times repeated : as for example when he says that it is of small importance to be excellent if you do not *do* something, " as if you were asleep or otherwise inactive." " And as at the Olympian games it is not the finest or strongest who are crowned but those who actually contest (for of these are the winners), so of those in life who are fine men it is they who *act* rightly who attain to anything." [2] Or again, " It is well said that one becomes just by acting justly and wise by acting wisely : but no one would be likely to become good by not so acting. And yet many do not live thus, but fly to talking ; and so think themselves philosophers and increasingly worthy, just as the sick who

[1] Eth. Nic., 1098*a*, 16. [2] id., 1099*a*, 4.

listen carefully to the doctor and do nothing that he suggests. As these cannot have healthy bodies with such a course of medicine, so those cannot have healthy souls with such a course of philosophy." [1] Doubtless all moral ideals have implied some form of activity as essential; but in the Greek tradition, as interpreted by Aristotle, this is not merely implied, it is explicitly stated, developed and made the basis for a moral attitude which is altogether removed from the finicking avoidance of "temptation."

We know the tendency to call that man morally "good" who is devoid of any intelligent or emotional activity and in the process of doing nothing at all therefore happens to do nothing evil; and we know that it is often a poor compliment to a man when we can find nothing else to say but that he is a "good" man. This barren conception of "goodness" is a result of basing morality upon a negative command such that avoidance is made to seem more important morally than action. With this the Aristotelian conception is contrasted; the result being that positive morality is substituted for the primitive morality of taboos. And it follows from this that (1) moral instruction is always instruction in what to do, not in what to avoid, that (2) such instruction is made effective not by penalties for "sin" but by positive reasons for "virtue," and that (3) the ideal life is one of full and increasing development. With this preliminary conception of the nature of "virtue" Aristotle begins. It is fundamental to his ideal of the good man and of the ideal society.

Aristotle's description of the ideal man is an attempt to allow for the governing conceptions of the

[1] Eth. Nic., 1105*b*, 9.

average man without forgetting the requirements of the philosopher. Therefore he is more valuable than Plato if we seek to understand the standards of the average Greek, and less valuable than Plato in his expression of exceptional or heroic character. The ideal man, then, according to Aristotle, has perfect self-control, greatness of spirit and intellectual insight. The last of the three elements in the ideal is philosophic. The average Athenian did not understand or appreciate what the philosophers called "theory": and even though the Platonic idea of philosophy is modified by Aristotle, enough remains in the conception of the life of contemplation to separate this ideal from the more ordinary ideals of Greece.

But we may discuss this first, since (1) it is more characteristic of Aristotle than the other conceptions and (2) it has had an immense importance in later history, in the formation of mediæval conceptions of "the contemplative life." The life of "theory" or trained insight is said by Aristotle to be the highest attainable by man, and indeed to be of such a kind that we may call it divine. When he refers to it the language of his *Ethics* becomes poetic and he says that we should as far as possible "be immortals," in accordance with that highest principle in us which is man's true self.[1] Aristotle makes the ideal man in this sense more self-sufficing than the ordinary man and also somewhat aloof from the common world. But the "other" world he inhabits is that of clear, continuous and strenuous thinking His activity is called "speculative" because most of knowledge is due to observation; and the word has no connection with dreaming or what is sometimes

[1] Eth., 1177*b*, in fine.

called meditation. Indeed Aristotle is very insistent here, as he is in the earliest and basic conception of his ethics, on the fact that excellence implies positive activity. The moments of exceptional insight are to be continued by vigorous application to the pursuits of real thinking throughout what Aristotle is made, in the translations, to call the "contemplative life." For he supposes, as Plato did, that real excellence is the ability to use exceptional moments for the guidance or the elevation of a whole lifetime.

The misunderstanding of this conception by mediæval Saints and Sages is instructive. To them also the contemplative life was an ideal. Thomas Aquinas sought in Aristotle the philosophical support for this; and, perhaps owing to the association of words in an inexact translation, he conceived the Aristotelian theoretic life as a life of meditation in a cloister. All great men must be astonished at their followers: and "si quis piorum animis locus," in some other sphere the original author must often stand aghast at what his commentators make him say. But of all transformations Aristotle has endured the greatest. Imagine the many-sided Greek, twice married, with neatly trimmed beard and a pretty taste in dinners, with a wide experience of the stage, of political life and scientific enquiry, meeting the mediæval monk who pursued what he called the contemplative life. Even the Polonius in Aristotle would be genuinely amused: for the mediæval monk understood little indeed of what the Greek called contemplation. At its worst the monk's contemplative life implied the somnolence of a vacant mind secured from the struggle of life; and at its best this life meant a concentration upon a f-

inherited metaphysical ideas or a continuous enthusiasm for a delightful but imaginary situation. In either case it bears only the faintest resemblance to the varied and emotional insight into present facts which is the Aristotelian life of "theory." The difference may be due largely to different social circumstances: but it is certain that the Greek never imagined anything like a cloister to be a possible place for an endurable, still less an ideal, life.

The other elements in the Aristotelian ideal of character—self-control and greatness of spirit—are typically Greek. They are, in less philosophical terms, implied in what we have already said as to the ideals of the Homeric literature and of the fifth century. Aristotle only formulates and analyses them. Self-control is said to be between precipitancy and weakness:[1] for a man should not be "taken off his feet," but, on the other hand, he should not be pig-headed, "opinionated, positive and bearish."[2] It is difficult to become the great-souled man, says Aristotle, for he must be the "perfect gentleman."[3] He thinks greatly of great things, and he judges rightly his own value, being not supercilious or insolent, but affable and yet independent.[4] In such phrases Aristotle attempts not a new enthusiasm but the clear expression of what is in the minds of average men. In that sense only is it an ideal character that he is drawing: and we must not suppose that even Greek thinkers were blind to the possibly ludicrous results of the commonly admired qualities. Thus Pericles as drawn by Plutarch is self-controlled and great-minded. The biographer says—"Pericles acquired

[1] Eth. Nic., 1150*b*.
[2] id., 1124*a*, 3.
[3] id., 1151*b*.
[4] id., 1124*b*, *sq*.

(from converse with Anaxagoras) not only an elevation of sentiment and a loftiness and purity of style, but likewise a gravity of countenance which did not relax into laughter, a firm and even tone of voice, an easy deportment and a decency of dress which no vehemence of speaking ever put into disorder. These things, and others of like nature, excited admiration in all who saw him. . . . The poet Ion says that he was proud and supercilious in conversation, and that there was a great deal of vanity and contempt of others mixed with his dignity of manners . . . but Zeno asked those who called the gravity of Pericles pride and arrogance to be proud in the same way." When we read such a description of the self-controlled and great-souled man, uncomfortable memories of the "strong silent man"—the ideal of those who are unable to speak coherently or to live with any subtlety—stir within the mind of anyone whose native literature is English. We cannot as a race throw stones at the Greek conception of dignity; but we may be allowed to say that it is sometimes comic. And were it not for the portentous solemnity of commentators, the ideal man of the Aristotelian *Ethics* would be seen more clearly to lack the wit and the self-criticism so dear to the more far-seeing Plato.

The Aristotelian ideal, however, is not complete until we have allowed for the conception of "friendship." That too is typically Greek, as is the sentence "friendship is most necessary for life; for no one would choose to live without friends, even if he had all other good things." [1] But again the analysis of the social bond must be omitted here, since we

[1] Eth. Nic., 1155*a*. This is the commonplace statement of the facts to which Plato refers in his description of Eros.

are concerned only with the ideal conceived. In that regard the ideal friendship is said to be a union of equals who are good (in the Aristotelian and positive sense),[1] a union not for pleasure or profit but of each for the sake of the other.[2] The conception, then, implies that "the good life," already as we have seen essentially a social life, is social in the sense that one discovers in it the personality of another. The height is reached which we have been climbing since in earlier times keeping the Anthesteria or going to the theatre to hear Euripides: and what Aristotle says of friendship is little more than any cultivated Athenian would have said. But it implies a conception of ideal life and character which was lost for centuries and is hardly common even to-day. The discovery of personality and the sufficient joy in that, without any further pleasure or profit, is a fundamental conception. It is implied in the Platonic conception of Eros, although Plato puts it into the form of myth: but it is clearly stated first by Aristotle. In it we find the explanation of much that has pained later ages, the joy of the Greeks in the companionship with boys and the almost reckless disregard for the physical basis of sex relationship. The peculiar forms in which this ideal of discovering personality is to be found in Athens were often evil and always very limited in their value; but the ideal in view should not be forgotten, and that was altogether excellent. We have ourselves to struggle to distinguish the legitimate and natural play of personalities from the twists and turns to which we are driven by social convention or inherited prejudice. But we too can see through to a better life in which the finest and

[1] Eth. Nic., 1159*b*. [2] id., 1157*a*, 18.

most enjoyable experience would be the friendship which is the free interplay of personalities for no other end than the delight of each in all.

At this point Aristotle begins to discuss society. The bond of all society is said by him to be this very "friendship"; not any external convention makes the *polis*, nor even brute need, but friendship in its widest sense. It is strange that Aristotle should have left undeveloped a conception so obviously fruitful. There are indeed hints of the friendship-theory of the *Ethics* when Aristotle discusses his politics; but the chief features of his political theory do not show, as they might have shown, the effect of his conception of friendship He seems to be driven away from this fundamental idea into a multitude of quasi-historical theories, and the result is a lack of cohesion between the *Politics* and the last part of the *Ethics*. It is with the *Politics* alone, however, that we must now deal.

In the theory of society, as in the description of individual character, the works of Aristotle contain more analysis of fact than suggestions of an ideal. This is peculiarly the case with the *Politics*. It is a store of social science. It contains not only keen criticism of social phenomena but also admirable constructive suggestions. Its range is very great. And therefore it must not be supposed that we refuse it due recognition if we neglect the greater part of it: for we cannot attempt to estimate its whole value nor to give a complete exposition of its contents. But as a statement of an ideal, in the sense in which we are using the word, it falls short of the precision and also of the elevation of Plato's work. It is banal, and yet typically Greek.

The point of interest for us is the social ideal ex-

pressed by Aristotle. What sort of society, in spirit and in form, does he imagine will be best worth working for? It is of the first importance that Aristotle names his ideal a *polis*. The *polis*, even at a time when it was becoming obsolete in fact, still obsessed the minds of philosophers; and they looked back rather than forward. Indeed not one thinker in twenty is able to look forward. But to Aristotle the *polis* meant more than it did to Plato: it was the only conceivable form of social organisation and it was the ultimate and absolute social union. The word itself carried the conceptions back to a more primitive stage of social development: and Aristotle's definition of the term never avoids the limitations set by past history. The *polis* even in its ideal form, remained for him a small, exclusive but fully organised company of slave-owning males, with a complete faith in the excellence of what is established. In that form it still remains the ideal of those who adore what they call the state.

There are, however, some differences. In the first place, it has been said that the *polis* of Plato and Aristotle is more of a church than a state: but there is this distinction between them—in Aristotle what we may call the "secular" elements are more prominent. Society still remains fundamentally religious in spirit, but the forms of religion are definitely given a subordinate place by contrast with Plato's ultimate appeal to Apollo.[1] The "parochial Sinai" of Aristotle is not, however, less absolute than Plato's. Further, besides the absolute ideal, the pure essence

[1] *cf.* Politics, 1299*a*. Priests, masters of choruses, etc., are distinguished from political officers. We see here the beginning of that specialisation of new institutions which is a mark of social growth.

For the whole question see Newman's edition of the *Politics*.

of the state, Aristotle allows for the "best in any given circumstances." [1] This implies that there may be many different forms of the ideal *polis*, in accordance with different times and places: and Aristotle is thus on the point of discovering what Montesquieu and later writers on political theory have elaborated. The Aristotelian ideal has, at any rate, this excellence that it is conceived in terms of actual life. Hence the arguments for slavery and the subjection of women are fully developed, and the forms of government are discussed in a broad spirit of accepting facts; so that what the ideal loses in elevation it gains in actual contact with Greek circumstances.

The *polis*, again, is in Aristotle's conception to be thoroughly organised for stability. Education is to be aimed at the maintenance of the established tradition; [2] and the worst of all evils, for which most elaborate remedies are suggested, is revolution.[3] As Plato thought selfishness and incompetence the greatest evils, so Aristotle thinks of instability in the form of government.[4] And indeed the common experience of Greek cities, especially since the later years of the Peloponnesian War, pointed to the evils of continual change. Security in one's expectations is, undoubtedly, one of the prime necessities of any political institution; and in this sense the high value given to the static elements in society by Plato andAristotle is not only thoroughly Greek but permanently true. There is, on the other hand, a certain prejudice among philosophers in

[1] Politics, 1288*b*., Bk. IV. init. [2] id. 1337*a*.

[3] id. 1302*a*., *sq*. Perhaps we ought to say "party politics" rather than "revolution." The Greek word has no exact English equivalent.

[4] Of course Plato also makes his ideal state, and supposes change to be a great evil.

favour of "the permanent" which Aristotle has brought over from his metaphysics to his political theory; and this is altogether illegitimate. There is no reason to suppose that a society which remains unchanged is for that reason any better than a society which changes: and since all society tends to change the ideal should give a place to the principles of change as well as to those of stability. It is peculiarly pernicious to make education into a method for maintaining what is established. On the whole, however, we may allow that Aristotle is, in a limited sense, correct in giving prominence to the maintenance of a tradition.

Next, the essence of the ideal *polis* is, according to Aristotle, the sharing in its administration and in its general life by all the citizens. The true man is a *polites* in this sense; and the good man is the good *polites*.[1] Thus, a form of what we should call democracy is implied in what Aristotle desires. He calls it constitutional government, but he means one based upon many minds rather than upon the views of a clique or a monarch. Here the Greek or Athenian conception of liberty is formulated; but the philosophical position given to it is not prominent, if we compare Aristotle's statements with the enthusiasms of the earlier literature. And with his usual attempt to be all things to all men Aristotle "mixes" the forms of government so thoroughly that he seems to imply that we can have in the same state the excellencies of every obsolete method of administration which has ever been tried. It

[1] It is misleading to translate the word by the English word "citizen." Our word is both too wide and too narrow. It includes "imperial" interests and excludes urban life. On the contrary the Greek word has a very local restriction but indicates an activity in affairs which we should call religious or cultural.

is the hope of Polonius once again. He is afraid of going too far beyond any opinion which is or has been held by a great number of men.

Finally, the ideal *polis* is said to be a complete whole. It is, in the first place, not to be too large ;[1] for otherwise the citizens would not know one another and the social bond of " friendship " could not really exist.[2] The limit of numbers is naturally set by the rule that each citizen must share directly in the making of law and in administration ; since the representative method had not yet been discovered. And the conception of immediate sharing in citizenship is defined by the very restricted means of communication then possible. In both points therefore the ideal is out of date. Again, the *polis* is not to be a company of men exactly alike, but of individualised citizens. This is the essential difference between a military association and a state ; and it marks Aristotle's divergence from the Spartan conception which so many Athenian reformers accepted. He is perfectly certain that the quality of a state is the quality of the distinct and varied individualities of its citizens ; and an ideal state, therefore, requires individual freedom of development. And again, the *polis* must be self-sufficing ; that is to say it should not depend upon any other group for provisions,[3] or for its organisation. This, as we shall see, is in the main, a mistake. It is a false ideal based upon a false judgment of fact ; and it is a continuance in philosophy of the evil in the Greek view of local autonomy. But it has this amount of good in it ; the *polis* is conceived as a society with all the essential functions of a high form of social organisation. It is not a mere trading

[1] Pol., 1326*a*. [2] id., 1263*b*. [3] id., 1326*b*, 27.

company or club of specialists. And, after all, our ideal must be that some such complete society should exist, even if we moderns refuse to suppose that it can be found in a small city.

One statement always connected with the name of Aristotle needs to be added. The state exists for a moral end, the good life, which is the aim of all men. Even in the restricted sense of the word "state" (i.e., not society at large) this is true; and it is Greek. The value of the statement can hardly be exaggerated, for it is, in fact, the only basis upon which any ideal of social progress can be secure; but in itself it is not, in our sense of the word, an ideal. Therefore it calls for no special elaboration here. It is a part of the Greek tradition which distinguishes that tradition entirely from the cruder conceptions of society embodied in earlier civilisations; and in this, as in so much else, Aristotle only gives precision to the commonly accepted Greek hypothesis. But it simply means that every social organisation implies a moral purpose, without defining precisely which social organisation supports this or that part of the whole moral life of man.

All these suggestions are admirable, although, as we shall see, in part mistaken; but from them all one receives the impression of an ideal which is somewhat commonplace. Aristotle does not, indeed, pretend to suggest a transformation of society, and the position he holds, in making the best of what already is or is beginning to be, is a great one. But from our point of view here the other excellent suggestions he has to make must be omitted. Those of them which are typically Greek are common to nearly all writers; and those which rise above the practical wisdom of tradition are few.

We must now pass to criticism. We have emphasised those elements in the ideals of Plato and Aristotle which seem to be of permanent value; but we have implied that many of their suggestions are obsolete. Some are even misleading. It would be a blind admiration which refused to see the great errors made by Plato and Aristotle, especially with respect to social ideals; and unless we give due consideration to their errors we cannot rightly estimate the excellence of their other statements.

As to ideals of individual character, enough has been already written in correction or criticism of some features in the Greek ideal, even in the most exalted form given to it by the philosophers. There is omission and there is exaggeration in their statements; but our tradition is strong enough to use what is good and to supply the deficiencies. For example, no word is said by the philosophers of love between man and woman such as we conceive it now.[1] And the attitude towards the future and especially towards children as the guardians of the future was not to them what it is to us. This is general as against both Plato and Aristotle. The deficiencies of the less philosophical ideals of Greece we have supposed to be more obvious, and the impercipience of Aristotle in particular we have already noticed. We may, therefore, suppose that the utility of such conceptions as those of right action (independent of intention), positive morality and intellectual insight, should not obscure our judgment. We allow much to the Greeks in general, —more to the philosophers; but they made mis-

[1] This does not mean that romantic love between the sexes was unknown, as we have seen in reference to Xenophon. *cf.* above, p. 131.

takes and they were undoubtedly limited in their ideals of individual character.

We may now pass to the conception of an ideal society. We have seen that it is based upon the experience of the life of the *polis* and that it implied a certain interpretation of that life; and even allowing for the excellent suggestion that society is a real and living whole, allowing also for the inevitable limitations due to the circumstances of the time, we must assert that both the average Athenian and the philosophers made great mistakes in their conception of an ideal society.

First, the ideal implies the isolation of a small group of men. It disregards, on the one hand, the fact that every Greek city and Athens most of all was in some way dependent upon other cities. For even if this fact is regarded as an evil, it should be discussed in any adequate rendering of the nature of society. But both Plato and Aristotle pass it over with, at most, a bare recognition. And yet the *Republic* of Plato is a discussion in the house of a foreigner and in the midst of a family whose foreign connections were numerous.[1] The chief speakers of the *Phaedo* are foreigners; and Plato must himself have recognised how much Athens owed to foreign science. As for Aristotle, if Athens had

[1] Kephalos, the father of Polemarchus, was a Syracusan who was invited to settle at Athens by Pericles. (Lysias: in Erat. par. 4.) Polemarchus lived after the death of Kephalos at Thurii, until driven out and back to Athens (412 B.C.) on a charge of Attic sympathies. He and his brother Lysias lived in peace in Athens and the Piræus, where they had three houses, one a factory with a hundred and twenty slaves. They were robbed of all their property by the Thirty in 404. Polemarchus was killed and Lysias fled. From that time Lysias worked for the Democracy in Athens, receiving the citizenship in 403. (Jebb, Attic Orators, I., 142 *sq.*)

been intellectually self-sufficing he himself could not have had a place there. How did he, a foreigner from Stageira, happen to acquire so much in Athens or teach so much to Athens? His ideas could not have come into contact with Plato's unless trade had already connected the cities of the Greek world; and his conception of making a good life by isolating every small local group is, therefore, pure nonsense. He, the observer, does not reckon with important facts. But we must.

Attic vases were in Etruria before 550 B.C. Athens imported corn, pigs, and cheese from Sicily, metal-ware from Etruria, and woven stuffs from Carthage. "All the pleasant things of Sicily and Italy were brought together at Athens. They were paid for partly in pottery and partly in Attic silver. The Euboic-Attic standard was already in use in most Sicilian states at the end of the sixth century." [1] The gild of the alien corn-dealers in Peiraeus was important enough to need special regulation.[2] The Megarian Decrees with which the Peloponnesian War opened were based on the perfectly well-known fact that Megara could be effectively blockaded because it depended on "foreign" trade. And therefore it must have been perfectly clear to practical politicians that the *polis* was not an economic whole. It is true that the contact between states seemed chiefly hostile; but it led to war only because war is the primitive method of commercial gain,[3] and the vague memories of the past rather than

[1] Cornford, Thucydides Mythistoricus, p. 30.

[2] Jebb, Attic Orators I., p. 227.

[3] This is impolite, but Aristophanes makes the remark in the *Lysistrata*, "All war is for money," and even the Thucydidean Pericles (I. 76) says that war is brought about by honour, fear, and money gain.

dreams of the future were the governing forces even when philosophers searched for an ideal.

Again, Plato and still more Aristotle is wrong in supposing that devotion to the *polis* was the loftiest ideal imaginable. Even despised Sophists had imagined a better; and whatever the comparative value of Hellenic unity and local independence, Plato and Aristotle should not have omitted to mention the dangers of a purely local sentiment. For this civic patriotism was a continual danger to the larger view of Greek destiny; and it was recognised at least by a few in every age that the war of city against city was civil war. Gorgias, at Olympia, made a speech in which "seeing Greece torn by faction, he became a counsellor of concord." "It befits us," says Lysias, speaking at Olympia in 388 B.C., "to desist from war among ourselves and to cleave with a single purpose to the public weal, ashamed for the past and apprehensive for the future; it befits us to imitate our forefathers, who when the barbarians coveted the lands of others, inflicted upon them the loss of their own; and who after driving out the tyrants established liberty for all men alike."[1] Eight years after this Isocrates addressed his *Panegyricus* to the Greek world. And yet of all this there is only a hint in the ideals of Plato and Aristotle, for Plato admits that the war of Greek against Greek is like civil war; and Aristotle says that if Greeks were united they might conquer the world.[2] Plato, indeed, in the *Theaetetus*, seems to imply another standard of excellence than local

[1] Lysias, Or. XXXIII., par. 6. He then appeals to Sparta to lead. Isocrates looks to Athens as well, or as the inspiring spirit.

[2] Plat. Rep., 469, and Aristotle, Pol., 1327*b*.

patriotism, but it is vague. And Aristotle is absolutely blind to the pernicious consequences which had already resulted from precisely that absolutism and exclusiveness of the *polis* which he so blandly accepts as an ideal. In moral judgment of social organisation the influence of Aristotle has been most evil; since, when men forgot his metaphysics and began to take his political theory for gospel, they became worse than mediæval. The followers of Aristotle maintained the absolute right of every powerful government and every unit of organised society which had enough prejudice behind it to be imagined self-sufficing; and so we in the twentieth century are still struggling against the limitations of our masters, the Greek philosophers.

Finally, as against the ideals of both Plato and Aristotle, and indeed of all Greece, the social end should not be conceived as static. This from our present point of view is a very grave defect; for it implies that there may be one form of society of which one can hope for nothing better than that it should remain as it is. The ideal then becomes a goal of action and not a mark of direction; but the very essence of a moral ideal is that it should be indefinitely in progress, and the excellence of any social organisation is proportioned to the amount of free play which it allows to the always increasing activities of men.

The attitude of Greek philosophers is well expressed in Aristotle's treatment of Revolution. The word does not simply indicate violent subversion of law and order; it means also political change. That change of the form of government could not occur without violence was a fact in Greece, owing to the early stage of political development which had been

so far reached. And violence is very rightly considered by Aristotle to be the greatest danger to be avoided. But it is obvious that Aristotle desires to keep things as they are. Education is to fit the new generation to the established structure of society; it is *not* said to be, what it equally well may be, the source of legitimate enthusiasm for changing the structure of society. And Plato too does not leave us any hope in the *Republic* or in the *Laws* that the governing authorities will continually improve their rule. They are conceived as maintaining a rule already perfect.

Two points must be made with respect to this static conception of the ideal society. First, it is obviously a reaction against the only too great tendency of the Greeks to change. No Greek city needed any philosophic invitation to στάσις in any sense of the word. Athens itself was peculiarly restless. It was natural therefore that the ideal should be conceived in the terms of permanence and rest, as it was natural that the extremes to which Greek individuals tended should be corrected by the "nothing too much" of popular morality. Secondly, all ages until the Renaissance have conceived the history of man as a falling away from some achieved or established order. The past is fixed, the future is fluid. Hence when you come to think of your social ideal you are influenced by the tradition into which you are born, and an established ideal order is placed by philosophers in the future indeed, but in a future that bears the features of the traditional past. So the ideal life appears to be a living up to an accepted or established state of things and not, as it is to us, a continual search for a new ideal.

We suffer from the opposite error the belief in inevitable progress. Change has become to us so good that we forget that the world does not necessarily and always change for the better. And as for intellectual restlessness, we seem to need more and not less of it; since although we accept change as a fact we do little to control its direction. In part, therefore, we perceive the limitations of the Greek ideal only because we need other ideals. But in part we are correct in condemning a too great admiration for stability and a false idea of the future as a stable situation. We are compelled to say to Plato and still more to Aristotle that the best future society will be one in which changes can be made without violence and one, therefore, which is so constructed as to promote changes which are progressive. For not all change is progress, and in correcting the Greeks we should not forget that unless we ourselves act to guide the changes in society in accordance with definite ideals, the future state of our civilisation will be even worse than the present.

CHAPTER XVII

THE AFTERGLOW

WHEN the vitality had gone out of Greek experience and the originality out of Greek literature and philosophy, there still remained for many years a radiance in which subordinate details of the ideal became more prominent. As water on a distant hill seems brighter at sunset when the colour has gone from the trees and the grass, so after the fourth century one can make out some features in the landscape of Greek experience which were not so clear before.

Our task is not historical; and therefore we shall not trace the gradual development of the ideals first expressed in the fifth and fourth centuries. But certain features in the Greek conception of life, which did not appear until after the fourth century, are not necessarily new in that later time. The *polis* had decayed and Greek life was no longer politically or economically or even intellectually independent; and the result was an emphasis upon aspects of life which had not appeared hitherto to be so important. Artistically the later period is generally condemned as decadent, although that criticism is probably due to a perverse and antiquated moralising rather than to clear aesthetic perception. For delicate and elaborate art is not therefore less wonderful as art, and there is no reason why bad

drawing should be held essential to a pure morality. In the same way the later literature of Greece is condemned; and justly, if originality is the highest quality of literature. In moral perception and creative idealism also the later period is much weaker. But all these apparent changes must not be held to be moral decay. The fatalism is certainly false which implies that the weakening of the Greek ideal must necessarily have occurred; and even in allowing that they had less originality, we must not refuse to the later Greeks a genuine and valuable moral life.

Two aspects of the Greek ideal may be selected in order to show what immediate result the Greek view of life had upon the men of the centuries immediately before and after the beginning of our era. One is emphasised by the Stoics, the other by the Epicureans. Many other developments occurred, as for example in the mysticism called Neoplatonic philosophy. But the simplest and most Hellenic of the later ideals were those which began with Zeno and Chrysippus on the one hand and with Epicurus on the other.

The Stoics preached a generous humaneness under control of reason; and they admired chiefly the severity, the high purpose and the many interests of Socrates.[1] The element of sobriety and immoveableness of spirit as an ideal in life is to be found very early in the history of Greece and, as we have seen, it is analysed by Aristotle; but to give such a conception prominence was only possible when society had lost its vitality. There was, however, a certain feeling for what later ages called Stoicism to be found all through the Greek tradition, and it is peculiar to Greece. It is the calm which survives

[1] Diogenes Laertius VI., 2.

the violence of passion or the rush of thought; it is not what is called Oriental subjection to fate, even though the Greek poets are always reminding us of the inevitable evils in human life. It is not the surly blindness of northern races, who dare all because they feel nothing. Greek calm as an ideal—for no one pretends that the Greeks attained it—was that of men open-eyed to evil, able to feel intensely and yet somehow and somewhere within them, secure. We cannot but connect it with the Greek religious tradition. To them religion was a common service for a common good, not a continual terror of unintelligible powers nor an occasional ecstasy; and religion, therefore, among the thinking few was easily transformed into morality, without losing its intensity or its elevation. From the near relationship to the divine [1] and the serenity which comes to one for whom divisions of race, or caste, or creed are of subordinate importance,[2] who watches the gradual conquest of reason,[3] there comes a lofty resolution. Practically this appears in universal sympathy combined with calm. For sympathy and calm are preached in all the fragments we have of early Stoicism, and the result appears in the ethical philosophy of Seneca and the meditations of Marcus Aurelius. But as a Greek tradition it affected many who were not in the strictest sense Stoic philosophers.

The spirit of it is in Plutarch, when he is not too mild and provincial. For Plutarch was a borough councillor in his political conceptions and an

[1] *cf.* the hymn to Zeus by Cleanthes. "Hail Zeus! . . . whose seed we are."

[2] *cf.* M. Aurelius on Socrates.

[3] "Chrysippus said that justice was in the nature of things and not a convention." Diogenes Laertius VII., 128.

obscurantist in his general attitude; and his writing has interest only because not even unintelligence in an early critic can prevent his putting down what is of some importance to later generations: but in some ways he is of the old Greek tradition, precisely in that admiration for calm which is so closely connected with affection for nature rather than dread of the things of earth. "The very name of earth," he says, "is truly dear and venerable to every Greek and there is through all Greece the custom of adoring and revering it as much as any of the other gods." [1] The same spirit comes out in his defence of vegetarianism, where he makes the quieter animals complain that they and not the wild beasts are killed by men and that not for necessity but merely to give a zest to appetite.

But stronger minds than Plutarch's had been working for many years after Plato and Aristotle at the elaboration of those ideals at which the old tradition hinted. The first Stoics were genuine Greeks. They desired to carry out that redemption of man from impulse and the immoral currents of physical life, which all Greeks knew in their hearts was the glory of what Greece had begun. They thought of a man so fine that he would feel with all other men of whatever race and indeed with the whole universe of life; and yet they aimed at making such a man secure from the degradation of being absorbed altogether even in so great a feeling. Stoic cosmopolitanism and humanitarianism are not contradictions of Stoic calm. The one is the necessary complement of the other; and the two make no unworthy ideal of character. But if we seek for its root in history we find it to be Greek.

[1] Face in the Orb of the Moon, ch. 21.

As for the conception of an ideal manner of life, first, asceticism was preached by Stoics; but in the Greek tradition it never was an end, nor was it a preparation for any other life. It was simply the necessary training for the ordinary human life of a man who desires something more in life than wealth and power. But asceticism is not the most prominent feature of the Stoic ideal. We find that rather in the aloofness from local interests, which is generally regarded even nowadays as a deficiency. Secondly, therefore, we must allow for the Stoic ideal of life as being a departure from the old loyalties of the *polis*. That also is Greek. It is conceived that a man may live well in the service of a loyalty as wide as humanity; and this ideal was not due to what historians have foolishly called the decay of Greek civilisation but to the natural development in the contact of many races and the growing distinction of interests among those of the same locality. Men were becoming more specialised in their interests, and at the same time more universalised in their contacts. The social forces which had before joined only men of the same locality were now separating the local groups into classes and uniting distant men of the same type. The Stoics attempted to set up the necessary ideal of life for this changed world; and it is nonsense to complain of their lack of local feeling, as though the antique *polis* still existed or as though that *polis* was morally any better than the new world. Civic patriotism in the old sense was obsolete and the Stoics all but succeeded in establishing a new ideal. But the vision faded. The confusion of narrow religious enthusiasm, fantastic hopes, and, on the other hand, egoistic or group desires for wealth

and power, overwhelmed the last traces of a rational morality ; and then came barbarism. For whatever the reason, whether because the Stoics had not conceived their ideal clearly enough, or because it was in part exaggerated, or because the circumstances of the time made the number of those who understood it too small and ineffective, this last gleam of the Greek ideal of calm and reasonable humanism gradually disappeared.

The other element surviving from an old tradition but prominent only in late expressions of the ideal life is that of a *calculus of pleasures*. This in its elaborate form is Epicurean. But it is not altogether new in the Epicurean philosophy, and may be treated as one of the subordinate conceptions of the ideal. For this too is in the Greek tradition. There is a certain sensuousness about Greek ideals of life, which is abhorrent to moralists of the Kantian type. We have seen it already in the love of physical beauty and the delight in dance and song. By contrast, in modern England, at least among the self-styled " upper " classes, if you want to dance you must pretend that you do it for charity or patriotism. The idea that beauty needs no excuse is not regarded as altogether proper. And this barren moralism degrades the ordinary impulses of life without thereby making the ideal any more effective. For there are many ordinary experiences, such as eating and drinking, which are regarded as " low " or at least negligible from the point of view of the ideal of life and character. But to neglect them or to despise them has never yet redeemed them from their lower and primitive connections, and those ideals have been misleading which have implied that one should not delight in food and drink. Only

the beast does not eat for pleasure but for need. It is indeed easy to show that one must not live wholly to eat and drink; and Kantian moralists persist in supposing that if you do not regard what is disagreeable as duty you must be a glutton and a drunkard. But, the Epicurean might reply, surely that is not the alternative. Food is not a mere supply of fuel to a machine, but an occasion for pleasurable experience; and it may be an opportunity for excellence. This is an ideal. In practice many races refuse to regard cooking as an art; and therefore they are compelled to sacrifice the pleasure which an art of cookery can cause. But Plato's sarcasms about cooking are an indication that the majority of Greeks valued what conventional moralists persist in regarding as degraded.

This pleasurable experience was what Epicurus took as his starting-point and with a very sane view of the physical basis of moral life, he attempted to state an ideal in accordance with nature. But it was not until the vitality of Greece had gone that men could see clearly that naturalness which was characteristic of the Greek conception of life, and therefore Epicureanism is itself only a late reflection of the old thought. With the acceptance and redemption of the sensuous went a reserve and sobriety which was, no less than the calculus of pleasures, to be found in Epicureanism. For indeed the early Epicureans felt that one could not attain to the fullness of pleasurable experience without a discipline that we should call ascetic. This was, however, a continuance of the old Athenian standard of "externals" in the civilised life. As we have seen in Athens of the best days private wealth was not great, and for the majority life was much more

simple than our middle classes could now endure. This produced in the Greek mind a very healthy opposition to mere display: for the material necessities of Athenian life were few and simple. Indeed the simplicity of Athens continued to be a well-known fact even in Lucian's day. Of Nigrinus, the philosopher, Lucian says "He praised Greece and, in particular, the Athenians. They are brought up, he said, to poverty and to philosophy. The endeavours whether of foreigners or of their own countrymen to introduce luxury into their midst, find no favour with them" [1] . . . "He further commended the Athenian liberty and unpretentious style of living, the peace and learned leisure which they so abundantly enjoy. To dwell among such men, he declared, is to dwell with philosophy; a single-hearted man who has been taught to despise wealth may here preserve a pure morality. No life could be more in harmony with the determined pursuit of all that is truly beautiful." [2] Thus even if this be a romantic view of the poverty of Athens by comparison with Rome, the ideal is clearly indicated. No Greek could quite forget that the attention to externals or material goods or physical pleasure involved also a certain sobriety in the use of all these. Thus far Epicureanism is genuinely Greek.

And as an abiding result of the Greek conceptions of worth in life and character we may find in the later ages the surviving reverence for reason. For this is peculiar to the Greek civilisation among all others; and the place given to reason, more perhaps than the place given to beauty, is the cause of that

[1] Lucian, Nigrinus, c. 12. Then follows a story of the rich man "taken down."

[2] Id., ch. 14. There follows the contrast with Rome.

tendency among all who revolt from an established tradition to look back to Athens. Men felt at the Renaissance as they did in the Nineteenth Century that Athenian philosophers first understood the power of reasoning, and that Athenian fools had at least more reverence than other fools for the reasoning they could not use. Both Stoics and Epicureans looked to a reasoned knowledge of the physical universe as the only secure basis for a good life. The Stoics had an elaborate physics: and Epicurus required of his disciples a knowledge of nature, although he said he cared nothing for Homer and culture. For to the end the Greeks never meant by reasoning the reading of other people's books; and it is strange that so many of those who are now enthusiastic for the study of Greek literature should be so opposed as they are to the Greek desire for scientific knowledge and so forgetful of the Greek subordination of mere literary form to exact thinking.

The ideal life, then, remains, so long as the Greek tradition survives, a reasoned life, whether it be Stoic or Epicurean or simply Eclectic. For the true Greek continued to reason even when he saw the uncertainty of the results. So Lucian, converted into a Greek, in the *Fisher*, makes Philosophy, describing her followers, say,—"That vague lady with an indefinite complexion, is Truth." He was himself sufficiently secured by reasoning from the revivalisms of his day: but although sceptical as to doctrine, he is clear enough as to the general rule. In the dialogues of the dead when Menippus meets Cheiron there is some questioning as to the kind of life one ought to choose; for Cheiron has come down below because he was tired of the life of earth. Menippus warns him that he may become bored again and

Cheiron then asks what is to be done. The answer is the very essence of Lucian—" Take things as you find them," he says, " like a sensible man, and make the best of everything," It is not perhaps an exalted sentiment, but it has about it that admirable sense which is the result of reasoning, which indeed those forget who call reasoning destructive as well as those who indulge in rhetoric about its excellence.

The disappearance of typically Greek ideals was gradual. It is possible to distinguish them from the Roman ideals of life and character which they so much influenced: and until about the second century of our era the movements of thought if not public activities may be shown to have been directed by the remaining force in the old Greek view of life. In a certain very wide sense the Greek ideals influenced and modified the new Oriental religions which took hold of Europe after the second century. But the limited influence of Greek thought, for example, on Christianity cannot be dealt with here. The confusion of the time cannot be fairly described in a summary. No doubt the criticism of slavery and the cosmopolitanism of the fourth century would have been impossible without what Athens had done. But for all practical purposes the Greek ideals of life and character were submerged and indeed hardly remembered during the Dark and Middle Ages. It is a mistake to imagine that what Greece stood for was understood, criticised, and rejected, or that any choice was made, by men competent to judge, between the Hellenic and other traditions. The last traces of the Greek ideal disappeared in a general confusion and not by any designed opposition, in the collapse of the whole of ancient civilisation. New ideals appeared and a new

beginning was made, which itself came to an end after about ten centuries. On the ideals of the Middle Ages the Hellenic conceptions of man and the world had only the very smallest influence. But with the revival of unecclesiastical thought the value of the Greek ideals began again to be recognised. The Renaissance in Italy was really influenced by the Greek spirit in its attempt to live naturally in the reasoned enjoyment of beauty. Unfortunately the scholars soon turned aside into an empty and altogether un-Greek formalism: and the remnants of mediævalism in the courts of the Renaissance turned what was fundamental in Hellenic thought into decorative nothings.

Greek influence revived in the Nineteenth Century. But that was a period of aesthetic and affected "culture," in the worst sense of that word of many senses; and to the mind of that time the Greeks were sentimental schoolboys. The excellences in the Greek ideal were often modified so as to suit the atmosphere of a Victorian drawing-room. The greater writers of the period, however, interpreted justly the Greek admiration for exact thinking and unsentimental art. The Greek influence on poetry and on politics soon began to be felt, and perhaps it was in part due to the Greek ideals that the world was delivered from the superficial culture of the early industrial period. For such men as Shelley and Swinburne, as Goethe before them, saw through the sentimentalism of the age to the real Greece. They and a few like them felt the inspiration to creative action which always comes from an understanding of Athenian literature.

In the main, however, the Nineteenth Century understood as little of Greece as the early Romantics

understood of the Middle Ages. From that Classicism we have been delivered by exact history and the study of religion. There was a period in our deliverance during which the Greek appeared to be a mixture of North American Indian and Australian aboriginee. But that has happily passed. And we are now once more under the full influence of ideals which, if not in themselves Greek, owe part of their force to the work done in Athens.

An uncritical admiration is worthless. For there was much that was mistaken in the Greek view of politics and ethics, as there was in their geography and mathematics: and there is no reason why we should accept their opinions on man and society, as we no longer accept their metaphysics and geometry. Further, even in those points in which they were correct, they were limited. To emphasise this as Greek is to misrepresent what the Greek intended. But we must acknowledge and repudiate those limitations. There remains, however, the inspiration of the method and the general attitude which they were the first to value. A thoroughly social life, reasoning and the love of beauty for its own sake—even if these were all that Athens suggested—these may be still directive ideals.

We still tend to take the outer form for the inner spirit. We have ignorant and sentimental "Greek" dancers and ungainly "Greek" dresses; or we have a study of Greek to the neglect of facts which alone the Greeks valued. But from the imitators of Greece and the grammars of Greek, the Greeks themselves may deliver us if we have the sense to see, through what they did, the ideals at which they aimed. These ideals illuminate our own desires, and the critical study of them may give us many

indications of the way in which to deal with the evils of our own day. For liberty is not yet attained in any country, society is not yet one, the love of beauty is still believed to be somewhat improper, and no one yet knows the true value of reasoning.

INDEX

A

Achilles, 94
Adonia, 9
Aeschines, 36*n*, 99
Aeschylus, 97
Anthesteria, 6
Antyphon, 5, 139
Apaturia, 7
Asceticism, 195
Aristotle, 237*sq*.
Aristophanes, 51, 58, 119*sq*., 135, 141
Athena, 7, 25*sq*.
Athenian festivals, 5
Athens (life in), 119*sq*.
Autonomy, 69, 73, 74

B

Beauty, 10
Brauron, 8
Britannia, 32

C

Celibacy, 227
Corinna, 201
Corn, 59
Croconidae, 53

D

Demeter, 35, 49
Demos, 33*n*, 120
Demosthenes, 5, 36*n*
Devil, 91
Dialectic, 212
Diodotus, 71
Dionysia, 5, 16*sq*. 35

E

Ecclesia, 6
Education, 204*sq*.
Eleusinia, 12, 46
Ephebos, 8
Epicurean, 261
Epic tradition, 6, 87*sq*.
Epidaunia, 51
Eros, 192

F

Farnell, 25*n*
Fasting, 54, 56
Festivals, 350

G

Guardians, 224*sq*.
Gymnasia, 205

H

Hector, 99, 101
Hermaia, 10
Hermes, 15
Heroes, 93
Hesiod, 87, 98
Homer, 87*sq*.
Huxley, 153

I

Ideal society, 214*sq*.
Iliad, 94
Iliad (influence of), 96
Immortality, 47
Ionia, 29
Isocrates, 57, 132 182, 256

J

Jahwe, 31

K

Kephalos, 254*n*
Knowledge, 182, 208.

L

Law, 80*sq.*
Lenaea, 36
Liberty, 69, 75*sq.*, 228
Lysias, 123, 256

M

Manicheanism, 91
Matter, 92
Marcus Aurelius, 230*n*, 262
Megarian Decrees, 225
Morality, 185*sq.*
Mysteries, 46

N

Napoleon, 93
Nemean games, 72

O

Odyssey, 94
Odyssey (influence of), 96*sq.*
Odysseus, 101
Olives, 27
Olympian games, 72*sq.*
Olympus, 90
Orphism, 47
Oscophoria, 26*n*

P

Panathenia, 6, 20
Pausanias, 22, 39*n*
Parthenon, 25
,, frieze, 21
Peisistratus, 4*n*
Peplos, 22
Pericles, 35, 245
Persephone, 49
Philosophers, 170
Plato, 18, 89, 189*sq.*
Plutarch, 3, 74, 263
Pluto, 56
Plynteria, 26*n*
Poets, 43
Politics, 64*sq.*
Polis, 2, 3, 60*sq.*, 78, 82, 248*sq.*
Polis (ideal), 214*sq.*
Pots (ceremony of), 15
Procharisteria, 26*n*
Protagoras, 5, 30,
Pythagoreans, 164*sq.*
Pythagorean games, 27

Q

Quintillian, 25, 107

R

Reason, 27
Religion (Athenian), 62
Religion (Roman), 31
Republic, 219*sq.*

S

Sappho, 201
Socrates, 28, 143
Sophists, 29
Sparta, 4, 68, 78, 205
Speaking (art of), 107
Synoikia, 10

T

Theatre, 3
Thebes, 1
Thesmophoria, 10
Thucydides, 3
Tragedy, 39*sq.*

Tragedy (effect of), 44
Treuga Dei, 50
Tyranny, 105

U

Utopia, 220.

V

Vases (attic), 225
Vase painting, 110
Victory, 26

W

War, 95
Women, 129*sq.*, 226*sq.*, 199*sq.*

X

Xenophon, 93, 106, 145

Z

Zeus, 7, 28

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